Peres calls for 'privatisation of peace'

DAVOS (AFP) — Israeli opposition leader Shimon Peres called Monday for a "privatisation of peace" through scientific initiatives designed to bring prosperity to the Middle East. "What we want is to introduce science as a contributing factor to the peace process," Mr. Peres, a 1994 Nobel laureate, former prime minister and leader of the Israeli Labour Party, told journalists at the World Economic Forum here. The Peres Institute for Peace, a non-governmental organisation that is due to start up in May, would be the guiding force for "peace" projects. Mr. Peres' ideas include building Palestinian and Israeli joint research institutes, linking up their hospitals and universities and fostering partnerships between cities in Palestine, Israel and Europe. Water, energy and infrastructure management all form parof his plans. "Peace advances on two legs, the political one and the economic one which is a free for all. ... I think peace should be privatised," he said.

Jordan Times

An indepen[illegible]b political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانكليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Israel rejects request for nuclear inspection

AMMAN (AP) — Israel has turned down Jordan's request for international inspectors to examine Israel's nuclear installations following media reports of radioactive leaks, a cabinet official said Monday. "Israel has rejected our request and informed the United Nations that it will not allow it to inspect Israeli nuclear installations," Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Hashem Dabbas told the Associated Press. He said the request was made three months ago, but did not explain the delay in announcing it. Mr. Dabbas told a local newspaper that Jordan had not detected any radioactivity, but was reacting to Israeli newspaper reports that began in 1995 suggesting leaks caused by an earthquake. In late 1995, Jordanian newspapers claimed that there was an increase in the number of cancer cases in the southern town of Tafileh. The Health Ministry denied the reports. Israel has denied the media reports and has said it will not allow international inspectors to examine its nuclear installations, which it says are for peaceful purposes.

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Arafat: Outstanding issues should be resolved before final-status talks

CAIRO (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat wants dozens of outstanding issues settled with Israel before the "final-status" talks which are due to start by mid-March.

"Thirty-four points of the Oslo (autonomy) accords are still unresolved," Mr. Arafat said in an interview published Monday in the Arabic newspaper Al Hayat.

"We should not start on the final phase before the points have been settled so that Israel does not use them as a tool for blackmail in the negotiations," he said.

Mr. Arafat referred to issues such as the release of Palestinian prisoners, the opening of Gaza Airport and seaport and the "safe-passage" crossings between the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

"We will ask for international arbitration" if there is no agreement with Israel, he told Al Hayat.

At the Davos economic forum in Switzerland on Sunday, Mr. Arafat protested that Israel has still not allowed Gaza airport, which was completed six months ago, to open.

Mr. Arafat said he was "ready to accept an international presence" at the port, airport and West Bank-Gaza crossings "if they (Israelis) do not want to trust us, or trust their soldiers."

Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat have agreed to hold talks Thursday to start ironing out the problems, before the two sides meet at

(Continued on page 7)

Kabariti meets Husseini, reaffirms Jordan's stand

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Monday reiterated Jordan's firm and principled stand with regard to Jerusalem and its support for the Palestinian people's struggle to attain their national objectives on Palestinian soil.

Speaking at a meeting with visiting Palestinian official Faisal Husseini, the prime minister said that Jordan was keen on further cementing Jordanian-Palestinian relations at all levels so as to safeguard common interests.

Mr. Kabariti listened to Mr. Husseini reporting on Israel's illegal measures in Arab Jerusalem and requesting that the report be conveyed to His Majesty King Hussein to be discussed with Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu during the latter's visit to Amman tomorrow (Wednesday).

Mr. Husseini, who is in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), told Jordan Television after the meeting that he briefed the prime minister on Israel's latest measures in the Arab city including the confiscation of Palestinians' identity

(Cnntinued nn page 7)

Syria wants U.S. pressure on Israel to resume negotiations

RABAT (Agencies) — Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam on Monday called on the United States to put pressure on its close ally Israel to resume soon talks with Damascus.

"Syria is ready for the talks with Israel on the condition that the negotiations begin from the point where they broke (last year)," Mr. Khaddam told reporters shortly after his arrival at Morocco's Rabat airport.

He was met by Moroccan Prime Minister Abdul Latif Filali and other government officials.

Mr. Khaddam, on a tour of North African countries accompanied by Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa, was expected to meet King Hassan on Monday evening at the royal palace in Rabat, a Moroccan official said.

"Syria expects His Majesty King Hassan's support for Syria's stand in the Middle East peace process," Mr. Sharaa said.

Mr. Khaddam reiterated that Damascus would resume negotiations with the Jewish state only after Israel agreed to return the Golan Heights.

Asked about a United States' role in possible Israeli-Syrian negotiations, Mr. Khaddam said:. "We are ready for the negotiations but it is up to the United States to convince Israel to respect its previous commitments."

Israel broke off talks after a wave of bombings in Israel last February and March.

A resumption of talks is stymied by Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's refusal to negotiate the return of land.

Mr. Khaddam excluded the possibility of an Arab summit being held in the coming months "because no new elements in the Middle East peace process have emerged which necessitate a summit."

The next Arab summit is scheduled to be held in Damascus in support of Syria's stand, a Moroccan official said.

The Syrian delegation earlier visited Algeria and Mauritania and on Tuesday will visit Libya and then Tunisia, a Syrian diplomat said.

Syria, meanwhile, praised Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for urging Israel

(Continued nn page 7)

Kahalani: Israel should leave Lebanon

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel must withdraw its troops from Lebanon unilaterally because too many Israeli soldiers are getting killed there, a cabinet minister said in an interview published Monday.

Avigdor Kahalani, minister of public security, is the first member of Benyamin Netanyahu's cabinet to support a unilateral pullout. He was reacting to the latest incident in Lebanon in which three Israeli soldiers were killed last week by a roadside bomb planted by Hizbollah guerrillas.

"Israeli soldiers are like (sitting) ducks in Lebanon," Mr. Kahalani, a retired general, told the Maariv daily. "The situation there cannot continue as it is."

Israel established the so-called "security zone" in southern Lebanon in 1985 ostensibly to shield northern Israel from guerrilla attacks. The zone is patrolled by Israeli soldiers and the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA), a force of about 2,500.

Syria is the main power broker in Lebanon and has blocked Israeli-Lebanese peace talks until progress is made in its negotiations with Israel for the return of the Golan Heights. The Israeli-Syrian talks have been deadlocked for a year.

Mr. Kahalani said he believed it was possible to work out a U.S.-backed arrangement in Lebanon without Syria's help.

He said a multi-national force should replace the Israeli troops and their Lebanese allies in the buffer zone.

"It is possible to talk to Hizbollah and with the Lebanese government," Mr. Kahalani told Maariv. "We can reach an agreement with them, even if the Syrians don't support it."

"The United States has to

(Continued on page 7)

Ex-minister warns Kuwait not to be caught in conflicting U.S. interests

KUWAIT (Agencies) — A former Kuwaiti minister on Monday warned his country not to get caught in the cross-fire of conflicting U.S. interests over Iraq.

"We must not become the victims of conflicts of interests in Washington between those American parties in favour of an escalation (with Iraq) and those on the other hand who want stability in the region," former Education Minister Ahmad Al Rabii wrote in the daily Al Qabas.

He explained the conflict as being between "those who buy oil and those who sell arms."

"Those who exaggerate the danger that (Iraqi President) Saddam (Hussein) represents, as well as those who minimise it, all love Kuwait, but sometimes a surfeit of love can be deadly," the former liberal minister wrote with a heavy dose of irony.

U.S. military officials last week highlighted the danger of a new assault on Kuwait, but the White House later played down the risk, saying Iraqi troop manoeuvres were typical at this time of year.

Kuwaiti Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah said on Friday he was "deeply concerned" about 150,000 to 180,000 Iraqi troops deployed around 50 kilometres from the border with his country.

He said he believed Iraq could be preparing for a repeat of its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, which led to a seven-month occupation of the emirate before it was liberated by a U.S.-led multi-national force.

An Iraqi official on Sunday dismissed the Kuwaiti claims as a "tempest in a teapot" designed to spark tension in the Gulf and help Washington sell weapons to the region.

Former Islamist Deputy Abduel Mohsen Jamal told Al Qabas newspaper that the United States and other powers used Iraq to scare Gulf states into asking for the support of the allies which seek control of the region's oil.

Since the end of the Iraqi occupation in February 1991, Kuwait has bought around $12 billion of weapons — most of them from the United States. Kuwait said on Sunday it was ready to counter any possible threat from Iraq, the Kuwaiti news agency KUNA reported.

The agency, said acting Information Minister Abed Al Aziz Al Abdullah Al Dakhil Commented at a news conference.

"If any signs of threats were shown from the Iraqi regime's side, we are capable of maintaining the stability and security of our country relying on our trust in God Almighty first of all, then on trust in ourselves, our government, constitutional institutions and cooperation with our brothers and friends," Mr. Dakhil said.

"I send a message of assurance to the Kuwaitis that there is nothing to fear now because all matters are proceeding under the strict control, observation and readiness of the competent Kuwaiti authorities."

He said: "Kuwait will not ignore in any way whatever is raised about the aggressive intentions of the Baghdad regime. It will take them seriously and will never neglect them."

Crown Prince stresses need for coordination and focus in developing sports movement

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Monday poses with Jordan's oldest living sportsman, Sheikh Hussein Srage, who played football in 1929, and two of the Kingdom's youngest athletes, Aysheh Shamayleh and Yasmin Kheir (Petra photo)

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Monday stressed that effective management was essential for ensuring success in sports.

Addressing an iftar gathering he hosted for sports officials and athletes, the Crown Prince stressed the need for continuous training and coordination among the concerned sports officials.

The Crown Prince also called on athletes and sports officials to set their priorities and to coordinate their efforts in order for the sports movement in Jordan to be successful, "especially that we are preparing for and approaching major sports events."

The Crown Prince was referring to the Sydney Olympics, which will be held in 2000, and the preparations for a sports convention to be held in Jordan in April as well as plans to build a sports school.

The Crown Prince said priorities in spending should be also set, in addition to implementing continuous plans in order to achieve a comprehensive advancement of the sports movement in Jordan.

The Crown Prince said sports organisations should put their priorities in order so that they can benefit from the existing official financial commitment to the development of the sports.

The Crown Prince noted that JD500 million will be spent on education over ten years, and that five per cent of this amount will be spent on sports over the coming five years. These funds can be better utilised if priorities are organised, he said.

"Development of sports is part of educational process," the Crown Prince told the gathering, which was attended by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania and Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid.

The Crown Prince stressed that Jordanian participation in Arab and international competitions should not be seasonal.

"Sports should be for all without any exception, and athletes and officials should work all year round to prepare for participation in national and international events," Prince Hassan said.

The Crown Prince also praised the positive participation of the handicapped in international events.

"This sports convinced us of its importance because of the good results it had accomplished in international events and locally," he said.

The Crown Prince also pointed to the need to prepare the junior and the national teams, stressing the need to concentrate on the young generation and provide them with the appropriate chance so that "there will be continuation between our children who are the hope of the future and the rest of the athletes who have made respectable accomplishments."

The media should play an essential role in supporting Jordanian sports, the Crown Prince said.

(Continued on page 7)

Kabariti: Tangible achievements made in first year of government

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Monday that his government, in its first year in office, has achieved tangible progress at the national, pan-Arab, regional and international levels.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, to mark the government's first anniversary on Monday, the prime minister said that under his government Jordan's relations with the other Arab states witnessed great improvement and development, especially with Saudi Arabia.

The improved relations with Arab countries, he said, have been reflected in the fact that in the past year half a million visitors from the Gulf states visited the Kingdom, 5,000 new jobs have opened in the Gulf for Jordanians and Jordan's exports to the Gulf countries more than doubled.

Jordan maintains very strong ties with Egypt and the rest of the Arab states of North Africa and continues to support Sudan's endeavours to protect its unity and territorial integrity and sovereignty," he added.

Mr. Kabariti described the Palestinian issue as the highest priority in Jordan's policy, adding that His Majesty King Hussein had translated this policy through his contacts at the regional and international levels calling for a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian problem.

Referring to the King's visits to Jericho and Gaza and his efforts in securing the Hebron accord, the prime minister said Jordan was determined to help the Palestinians establish an independent state in Palestine.

On Jordan's ties with Europe, he said, an agreement on partnership with the European Union was being finalised. Once it has been approved it would open the door for Jordan to increase its exports to Europe and acquire more European aid, he said.

The development of Jordan's relations with the U.S. reaching the level of strategic alliance provides tangible proof of Jordan's pivotal role in the region, Mr. Kabariti noted.

On domestic affairs, the prime minster referred to the package of economic reforms and the government's success in reducing the margin of deficit in the fiscal budget for 1997 as well as its plans for ensuring a social safety net.

He also referred to the process of privatisation and said that the government has gone a long way towards achieving this end.

Mr. Kabariti predicted that the economic growth in 1997 will not be less than 6.5 per cent and that national exports will increase by 8.8 per cent over 1996.

He said that his government was going ahead with plans to fight smuggling and dealing with all forms of corruption.

Bhutto rival asserts his party heading for victory

LAHORE (Agencies) — Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, rival to the ousted Benazir Bhutto, said his party was heading for a big victory in Monday's Pakistani elections.

"We are winning from all over the country," he told cheering supporters hours after the voting closed, but before any official results had been declared.

President Farooq Ahmad Leghari confirmed reports that voter turnout in national polls had been very low.

Turnout in the country's largest province, central Punjab, was only 27 per cent and a similar figure was recorded in southern Sindh, he said, speaking at an election office established by state-run television for broadcast of election results.

Turnout was believed to be even lower in southwestern Baluchistan province, he said.

Mr. Leghari did not give a figure for the country's fourth state, North West Frontier province, but said turnout in tribal areas of the region was more than 50 per cent.

Adult franchise has been extended to the tribal population for the first time in the country's 50-year history by an interim government, which stepped in after Mr. Leghari dismissed Ms. Bhutto on Nov. 5.

The chairman of a team of Commonwealth poll monitors said the elections were largely free and peaceful.

"There were some shortcomings," former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser told a news conference.

"However, none of these was in our judgement of a scale or character as to have been likely to produce a different outcome."

Mr. Fraser, whose team toured polling stations during the nine hours of voting, added: "We are satisfied that all those who wished to vote were able to do so and expressed their wishes at the ballot box."

At least seven people were killed in two separate incidents, although officials said that generally polling was peaceful.

Five people were shot dead when two groups clashed over a land dispute near a polling station in Gujranwala in the central province of Punjab, police said. In the southern city of Karachi, where hundreds have died in factional feuding in recent years, two supporters of the ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) were killed, MQM sources and ambulance workers said.

MQM spokesman Kunwar Khalid Younus said polling agent Mohammad Hanif died in hospital after being kidnapped and tortured by unidentified gunmen. He was the brother of an MQM candidate for the Sindh provincial assembly. Each party nominates agents to observe voting at each polling station.

Mr. Younus said gunmen also killed another MQM sympathiser in the eastern Al Flaha Society district.

Hundreds of people have died in feuding between MQM factions in the past four years. The MQM speaks for Urdu-speakers who migrated to Pakistan from India in 1947 and their descendants.

The MQM and the breakaway MQM-Haqiqi faction traded charges of harassment and the MQM-Haqiqi eventually said it was boycotting the last hour of polling. The faction had not been expected to gain any seats.

Politics not economy puts Yemen's bid to enter GCC on hold

DUBAI (R) — A response expected next week to Yemen's bid to join the elite club of six wealthy Gulf Arab States will not go beyond granting the impoverished country a favourable status. diplomats and analysts said on Monday.

"Denial of full membership will be very diplomatic. The Gulf club is not open for new members." said a Gulf-based analyst.

"The most that Yemen could hope for is an observer position or an arrangement along the lines of a most favoured nation."

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) formed in 1981 groups all the other countries of the Arabian Peninsula between the Gulf and the Red Sea — Saudi Arabia. Kuwait. Bahrain. Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman.

UAE media said on Monday Qatar's Cabinet Affairs Minister Mohammad Ben Khalid Al Thani would visit Sanaa next week to deliver the GCC response to Yemen's application.

Yemeni Minister for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Abdullah Ahmad Ghanem in December delivered the membership request to the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, whose country hosted the annual GCC summit.

Analysts said it was a tactical move by President Ali Abdullah Saleh to stress Yemen's claims to a legal right to join the Gulf alliance.

Mr. Ghanem had said earlier in an interview with Yemeni media that his country qualified for membership on the basis of its geographic location in the Arabian Peninsula and its historical ties with GCC states.

Gulf-based diplomats said the UAE. Oman and Qatar favoured Yemen's admission. but stopped short of pushing the issue further as arguments about risks and the council's homogeneous structure surfaced.

"Admitting a revolutionary republic with socialist roots into a capitalist gathering of one kingdom. one sultanate and four emirates could make Gulf leaders uncomfortable." said one analyst.

Yemen is the only country in the Arabian Peninsula with political parties. opposition newspapers and active Islamist participation in government.

The Republic of Yemen was formed in May 1990 by the merger of the conservative North Yemen and the Marxist South Yemen following hundreds of years of separation.

Mr. Saleh first became North Yemen's president in 1978. Of his four predecessors since North Yemen became a republic in 1962. three were assassinated while in office and the fourth resigned before completing his term.

Yemen has ironed out differences with most Gulf Arab states over its support for Baghdad during Iraq's 1990-91 occupation of Kuwait and made progress in resolving a 60-year border dispute with Saudi Arabia. the council's dominant power.

Analysts said Yemeni leaders believed a firm. stable and unified Yemen after Mr. Saleh's success in crushing a 1994 secessionist bid by leaders of the former South Yemen boosted their chances of qualifying for full GCC membership.

They said Yemeni leaders believed that reforms. increased oil production and gas projects would eliminate economic reservations by council members.

"Yemen is coming out of the economic bottle-neck. In a few years it will not be a burden to the deficit-ridden member states," a Gulf columnist said.

Yemen. a small independent oil producer. also hopes to qualify for membership of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) before the turn of the century. and is aggressively developing a number of liquefied natural gas projects.

"Yemen's membership in the GCC is strategically feasible. This has been on the mind of American planners for a long time," an Arab affairs journalist wrote in the London-based daily Al Asharq Al Awsat.

He said the United States believes Yemen to be the southwestern gate to the Gulf and could make possible the deployment of GCC or allied troops at strategic points from the gulf to Bab Al Mandab at the southern entrance to the Red Sea.

Diplomats said Sanaa's application was discussed at length at the December summit's closed sessions. but no mention of it was made in the final statement.

The only mention of the Yemeni request was at a news conference by Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jabr Al Thani who ruled out full membership but said a Qatari envoy would deliver a "good" response to Sanaa.

MILK PROTEST: Israeli dairy farmers hold a pair of two-week-old calves during a protest against duty-free dairy imports outside the industry and trade ministry in West Jerusalem on Monday. Some three dozen farmers called on trade officials during the demonstration to back down from a decision to allow the import of up to 100 million litres of dairy products equal to about 10 per cent of Israel's dairy production (Reuters photo)

Turkish court to probe anti-Israeli gathering

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish prosecutors have opened an investigation into anti-Israel protests organised by a town council run by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's Islamist Welfare Party, legal officials said on Monday.

"Documents have been sent to the state security court," an official at a public prosecutor's office told Reuters. "We have begun (an investigation)," she said.

The main opposition Motherland Party (ANAP) also asked Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller in a written request to explain the conduct of the Iranian ambassador at last Friday's "Jerusalem night," in the Ankara municipality of Sincan.

The event. broadcast on Turkish television news programmes, has upset the country's secularist elite. A speech by Sincan's. Welfare mayor has been criticised in the media as a call for the implementation of Islamic Sharia law.

Youths dressed as Palestinians pretended to throw stones at Israeli troops in a play at a public hall in Sincan to mark Jerusalem Day. declared an annual day of protest against Israel by late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The mayor and the Iranian ambassador spoke on a stage draped with the banners of Fathi Shaqaqi. the late leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group and Imam Musa Sadr. a cleric venerated by some Lebanese Shiites.

Mr. Erbakan, Turkey's first Islamist leader, has gone back on promises to scrap a military training accord with Israel that has angered Arab countries and Iran.

But the prime minister has raised the hackles of the secularist wing of his coalition government in recent weeks with plans to build mosques and other Islamist programmes.

"We are going to examine the Iranian ambassador's remarks... and we will contact the Iranian authorities," Foreign Ministry spokesman Omer Akbel told reporters.

Secularism is one of the key tenets of the modern Turkish state.

Ambassador Mohammad Reza Bagheri told Friday's gathering that "victory will come to Islam across the world."

Supporters of Sharia law "should not be afraid of being called fundamentalists by the others," he added. saying: "They are the most rational of the faithful."

The head of the Nationalist Democratic Left Party, Bulent Ecevit. called Monday for the ambassador to be expelled and said the mayor who organised the gathering at which the ambassador had spoken to be kicked out of his post.

Former Foreign Minister Deniz Baykal. the head of the Republican People's Party, called for Turkey to give "an adequate response to the Iranian ambassador."

Saudi to finance Islamic centre in Arab Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has agreed to help build an Islamic cultural centre in East Jerusalem and provide interest-free mortgages to Palestinian residents of the occupied sector of the city, official Palestinian sources said Monday.

Under an agreement signed Sunday by Palestinian Religious Affairs Minister Hassan Tahboub and Abdul Al Rafiya Abed Al Muktalep of the Saudi Development Bank. the bank will provide $5 million for construction of the Islamic centre, the official Palestinian news agency WAFA reported.

No timetable or other details were given for the plan to build the centre in East Jerusalem.

During Sunday's meeting at the Orient House. the unofficial Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) headquarters in East Jerusalem, the Saudi bank also agreed to provide long-term, interest-free mortgage loans to help Palestinian residents purchase homes in the city. WAFA said.

The two projects follow moves by Israel to strengthen its grip over East Jerusalem.

Last month the Israeli government approved a $43 million investment project for the eastern sector, including construction of a new Jewish neighbourhood.

Palestinians want to make East Jerusalem the capital of a future independent state. The final status of the city is due to be negotiated in talks on a permanent Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement that are scheduled to begin by mid-March.

The right-wing government of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu has repeatedly complained about what it claims are official activities in East Jerusalem by Palestinian National Authority.

Council to build HQ in Al Bireh

The Palestinian legislative council will begin building this year a new temporary headquarters on the outskirts of Jerusalem, where they hope to set up eventually, the council leader said Monday.

Council President Ahmad Qouriea told the Jerusalem Post newspaper that $2 million has been set aside for the new headquarters, to be built in Al Bireh, neighbouring Ramallah north of Jerusalem.

Mr. Qouriea said that after final status talks with Israel. due to conclude in May 1999, he hoped the council's permanent headquarters would be in Jerusalem's Old City.

Mr. Qouriea did not rule out the possibility that Al Bireh could become part of a "greater Al Quds" joining Arab villages outside the current municipal boundaries of Jerusalem to serve as a capital. a proposal made by some experts to break the deadlock over the Holy City's final status.

"This is something which can be discussed later," he said.

Jordan parties urge Arab League to call summit to back Syria

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ten Jordanian opposition political parties on Monday urged the Arab League to convene an Arab summit meeting to rally Arab countries efforts behind Syria, which, they said, is now exposed to "a U.S. backed Zionist campaign and increased political pressure to succumb to Israel's desires and conditions."

"Syria is facing a hostile Zionist propaganda campaign backed by the U.S. and military threats aimed at harming its stability and also designed to ruin Syria's links with Lebanon," said the statement.

"Lately Syria has come under increased pressure from the Zionists following the conclusion of the Hebron accord between the Palestinians and Israel. with Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu issuing threats against Damascus and stressing that his government would never give up the occupied Syrian (Golan) Heights for security reasons and because the Jewish state needs the water resources in the plateau," said the statement.

The statement said that Israel had been issuing threats of war against Syria saying that war will force Damascus to accept Israel's terms for a settlement.

The political parties requested the following:

1. Arab countries which attended the Cairo Arab summit last June abide by the summit's resolutions and stop all steps for normalisation with Israel.
2. The Arab League revive an Arab accord on the "boycott of the enemy."
3. The Arab League take steps to revive common Arab action and achieve Arab solidarity.
4. Contacts be intensified with various nations to expose Israel's current drive to ruin all peace efforts and its rejection of the principle of exchanging land-for-peace.
5. An emergency Arab summit be convened to voice support for Syria and Lebanon in the face of the Israeli threats.

Filipino on death row to seek clemency from victim's family

ABU DHABI (AP) — A Filipino given a death sentence for killing an Indian man will appeal to the victim's family for clemency, his lawyer said Monday.

"We are expecting to get together with (Philippines) embassy officials this month to discuss ways of getting in touch with the victim's family to ask them to drop their death sentence demand," said Badawi Noor, a lawyer representing John Aquino.

Aquino was sentenced to death in 1989 for the murder of Harbajan Singh and the wounding of an Indian colleague with a kitchen knife in Ajman, one of the seven sheikdoms in the United Arab Emirates.

Aquino said he did it in self-defence after being attacked by the two men.

The case has been dragging through the courts since the incident. The death sentence still has to be upheld by the Federal Supreme Court and endorsed by the president of the UAE Sheik Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan, before it can be carried out.

The court on Saturday postponed the case until March 8 to give the lawyers time to contact the victim's relatives and ask for clemency.

Under Islamic law the victim's family has control over the fate of the convict. For murder or rape, the family can demand the death sentence, accept blood money, press for a jail term or set the criminal free.

In the UAE, death sentences are carried out by a firing squad. Blood money is stipulated at a minimum of 150,000 dirhams ($41,000) under the law.

Qadhafi invites Clinton to Libya

BEIRUT (AP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi on Sunday invited Bill Clinton to Libya and said he was prepared to go to Washington to meet the U.S. President. "I am ready to meet Clinton, so if the imperialist circles allowed him, let him come, and if he is ready to receive me (in the U.S.), I am ready to go." Colonel Qadhafi told Lebanon's private Murr Television. But Col. Qadhafi said he doubted Mr. Clinton would accept his invitation. "Clinton cannot do much because he is controlled by dangerous nightmares like the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), the National Security Council and the Jewish lobby. but he is a poor decent guy who loves peace and is not aggressive," Col. Qadhafi said. The United States severed diplomatic ties with Libya in 1981 and five years later froze Libyan assets in U.S. banks after accusing Col. Qadhafi of supporting international terrorism. U.N. sanctions imposed against Libya in 1992 bar flights to and from the country. The sanctions were imposed in an attempt to force Libya to surrender two suspects wanted in connection with the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am Flight 103 jet over Lockerbie, Scotland that killed 270 people.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

13:30	Cartoon (Captain Planet)
14:00	French Programme — Sciences Cartoon
14:30	Dog House
15:00	Feature Film — "The Comrades of Summer"
16:50	Call for Prayer and Iftar
17:30	You Bet Your Life
18:00	French Programmes
18:15	Magazine — Extra Large
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Murphy Brown
20:00	Oriental Rugs
20:30	Encounter
21:10	Lost Civilisations (Documentary)
22:00	News in English
22:25	Islam in a Changing World
23:00	Snowy River
23:50	Mini Series — "Touch and Dine"
01:05	Ramadan Talks

PRAYER TIMES

05:05	Fajr
06:24	(Sunrise) Duha
11:49	Dhuhr
14:49	'Asr
17:15	Maghreb
18:34	'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh. Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Under the effect of a cold air mass accompanied by a depression, it will be rainy, cloudy, cold, and winds westerly active. Snow is expected to fall on areas 1,000 metres above sea level. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy with a chance for scattered showers. Winds will be southerly moderate and seas rough.

Amman	02/06
Aqaba	06/15
Deserts	01/08
Jordan Valley	06/15

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 09, Aqaba 20 Humidity readings: Amman 95 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Khalil Al Jbali	740740
Dr. Waleed Al Masri	675485
Dr. Yousef Rashed	896301
Dr. Ahmad Manna'	839759
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu	281484
Al Quds pharmacy	(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Waleed Halaseh	982799
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Dept	661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone Reparis	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity	644281/6
Akileh Maternity	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine. Shmeisani	607071
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic. Abdali	666126/37
Al-Ahli. Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	777101/3
Al-Bashir	775111/26
Army, Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/50
Amal Hospital	674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital	(02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT
ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15	Sanaa (RJ)
07:25	Damascus (RJ)
09:25	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05	Muscat. Dubai (RJ)
10:05	Beirut (RJ)
10:15	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
12:15	Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)
16:20	Cairo (RJ)
17:15	Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:20	London, Frankfurt (RJ)
19:00	Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

05:05	London (KJ)
13:30	Kiev (6U)
14:05	Munich (YP)
16:30	Rome (AZ)
18:15	Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:10	Beirut (ME)
20:30	Cairo (MS)
21:40	Tel Aviv (LY)
23:40	Amsterdam (KL)
23:59	Aden (IY)
00:55	Bucharest (RO)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:20	Aqaba (RW)
18:55	Tel Aviv (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:20	Beirut (RJ)
08:30	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:05	Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:15	Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
12:00	Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10	Paris (RJ)
12:15	London (RJ)
12:15	Cairo (RJ)
12:30	Frankfurt (RJ)
14:00	Jeddah (add) (RJ)
20:30	Damascus, Larnaca (RJ)
20:30	Jeddah (RJ)
21:00	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:00	Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights

07:30	London (KJ)
07:35	Damascus, London (BA)
14:30	Kiev (6U)
15:45	Munich (YP)
18:15	Dubai (EK)
18:40	Rome (AZ)
21:30	Cairo (MS)
22:50	Tel Aviv (LY)
00:40	Beirut, Amsterdam (KL)
01:00	Aden (IY)
01:55	Bucharest (RO)
07:45	Beirut (ME)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:50	Marka (departing from QAIA) (RW)
17:15	Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30	Aqaba (RW)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

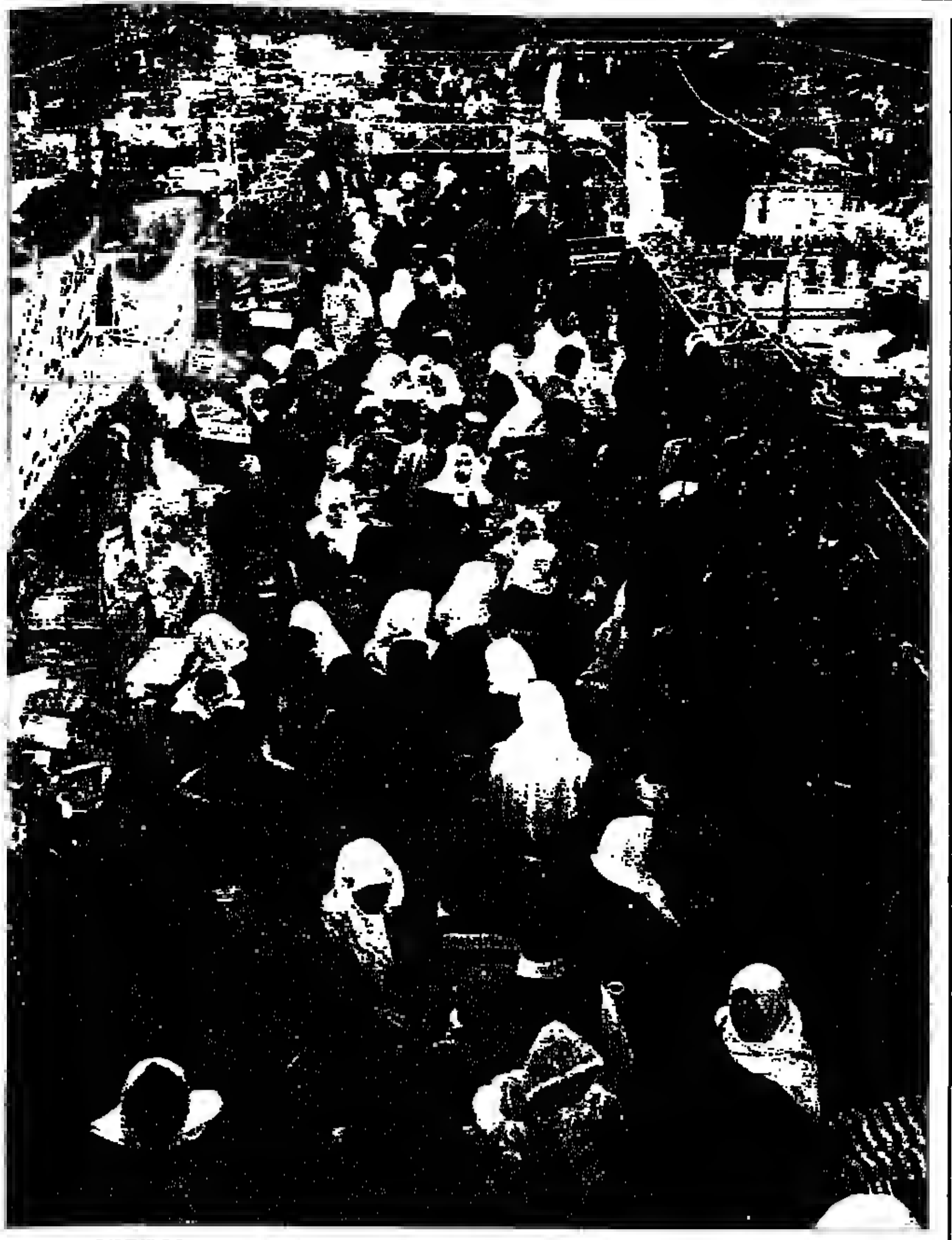
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/500
Banana	550/550
Banana (imported)	930/750
Cabbage	70/40
Carrot	180/140
Cauliflower	250/150
Cucumber (large)	280/150
Cucumber (small)	440/250
Eggplant	150/100
Fava beans	780/500
Garlic	1150/950
Grape fruit	160/100
Lemon	400/250
Marrow (large)	200/120
Marrow (small)	330/200
Onion (green)	180/120
Onion (dry)	180/120
Orange	570/450
Peas	900/700
Pepper (hot)	420/220
Pepper (sweet)	280/150
Potato	260/180
Radish	100/60
Spinach	220/150
String beans	640/400
Tomato	150/100



EID SHOPPING: Jordanians crowd at an Amman market Monday to buy special goods: People began to shop for clothes, food and gifts to celebrate Eid Al Fitr, the feast marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. This year's Eid Al Fitr will fall on Feb. 8 or 9, depending on the sighting of the moon of the lunar month of Shawal (Reuters photo)

Customs Department announces 1996 data, duty and sales

AMMAN (Petra) — The Customs Department Monday announced that it collected JD 744.5 million in customs duty and sales tax last year, an increase of JD 98.4 million over 1995's total of JD 646.1 million.

Department Director Nazmi Abdullah attributed the increase to a 16 per cent augmentation of Jordan's imports, an increase of 13.3 per cent in the rate of customs duty on imported goods, and an increase of 18 per cent of sales tax on these goods.

Mr. Abdullah also announced that his department has finalised a new draft law on customs which closes a number of loopholes in the existing law and removes ambiguity and repetition which, he said, used to impede the law's application.

He affirmed that the new draft law caters to the requirements of global economic regulations.

Mr. Abdullah stated that the draft law facilitates custom procedures and empowers custom departments with decentralised authority while providing a greater measure of protection for local Jordanian industries and stimulating foreign trade.

He explained that earlier, Parliament endorsed a new law regarding the unification of customs duty on imported goods for re-export.

Mr. Abdullah enumerated smuggling across borders and department measures to deal with such illicit operations, saying that among the various items seized by customs officials in 1996 were 17 firearms, 198 cars, 724 tyres, 2,599 electrical appliances, 131,977 kilogrammes of various foodstuffs, 309 pieces of jewellery, 188 artefacts, 969 carpets and blankets, 2,505 pairs of shoes, 769,709 cigarette cartons and 596,416 sheep.

The Customs Department is working in conjunction with the German Agency for Technical Development to modernise and upgrade the department's operations and create a customs training centre in Amman, he said.

JPA appeals to journalists to avoid 'scandalous'material

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Press Association (JPA) Monday appealed to journalists working for weekly tabloids to avoid publishing news or other material, considered scandalous or which abuses press freedoms, tampers with public decency or tarnishes *cultural values and* traditions.

During a meeting, attended by Minister of Information Marwan Muasher and Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughmi, editors of weekly tabloids and JPA council members, JPA President Saif Sharif stressed that journalists must abide by JPA ethics and the journalists code of honour.

He warned that the JPA will deal firmly with pernicious publications and will refer errant journalists to the JPA disciplinary council, authorised to expel journalists from the association.

Urging editors-in-chief of tabloids to exercise their authority in governing their journalists' work in line with the JPA code of ethics, Mr. Sharif warned that editors-in-chief bear legal responsibility for any violations of the code in material published in their papers.

Dr. Muasher and Mr. Dughmi jointly emphasised that journalists must abide by the provisions of the Press and Publications Law as well as those of the JPA and stated that the tabloids ought to be objective and protect their credibility by avoiding the publication of rumours, levelling accusations, tarnishing any individual's personal life, tampering with public decency or committing any form of offence against national traditions and norms or harming national or religious beliefs.

Last month, members of the Lower House of Parliament attacked weeklies which, they maintained, publish indecent material.

The deputies demanded that the government take action against this practice.

Deputy Bassam Emoush accused some weekly tabloids of publishing what he described as indecent and unethical material and stated that some weeklies have carried sexually explicit articles.

At that time, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti responded by saying that any promotion of decadent behaviour must be halted and he stressed that violations of privacy and disrespect of public decency was a blatant infringement of human rights and does not represent the true mission of the press.

Mr. Kabariti told Parliament that his government has already referred 10 such cases to court and that the Press and Publications Law should act as a deterrent to further violations.

Dr. Muasher and Mr. Dughmi Monday discussed the cases of certain journalists who have been referred to court and they promised to respond to the journalists grievances if any.

At the *meeting* it was agreed that a statement published by the JPA on Jan. 27 would serve as a common code for government and press.

The JPA statement criticised weeklies which "abuse press freedoms in a scandalous manner" and urged journalists and editors-in-chief to neither tarnish Jordan's culture, values nor traditions.

Those who do not abide by press ethics and morals or publish indecent, obscene and otherwise unacceptable articles will be referred to the JPA disciplinary council and risk having their names struck off the JPA membership list, the statement said.

At the JPA meeting it was agreed that no weekly should interfere with such issues as national unity, public ethics or slander people's reputations, offend their sentiments and the Jordanian people's traditions.

Citizens of 27 new municipalities to head for voting polls

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanians will go to the voting polls on Feb. 26 to elect the mayors and council members for 27 newly-established municipalities, Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat announced Monday.

Following the elections of July 1995, the coming ones are the second municipality elections to be held after the restoration of full multi-party political life in 1992.

With ten out of twelve women candidates being elected, including one as mayor, the 1995 municipal by-elections were marked by increased women's participation and observers expect the coming elections to achieve a similar level of women's participation.

Dr. Tubeishat told the Jordan Times that arrangements for February's elections are still under way and that the "governors of the governatorates involved in the elections are scheduled to disclose the candidates' lists soon."

He added that voters in each of the municipalities will be provided with two distinct voting ballots, one to elect the mayor and one to elect municipality council members.

The 27 new municipalities, established last year on the basis of already existing villages, increase the number of municipalities in the Kingdom to 291, Dr. Tubeishat said.

France affirms aid to Jordan in various fields

AMMAN (Petra) — France said Monday that it will grant Jordan more aid in the cultural, technical, and scientific fields.

Minutes to that effect were signed by Jordanian and French officials at a meeting in Paris.

The Jordanian team, led by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf Huneidi, reported that France has consented to give Jordan further aid to support the Kingdom's efforts in cultural, scientific, technical, agricultural, water, tourist, health and archaeological fields and will encourage French universities to advance cooperation with Jordanian institutions of higher learning, an official statement said.

The meeting, the tenth of the French-Jordanian committee, also resulted in France agreeing to help restore Jordanian archaeological sites and in providing training for the protection of antiquities, the statement said.

In addition, the French government agreed to increase its aid to the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation.

The Jordanian delegation to the meeting included representatives of the ministries of finance, planning, industry and trade, and agriculture, Director General of the Department of Antiquities Ghazi Bisheh, a representative of the Central Bank of Jordan and Jordan's Ambassador to France Sharif Fawaz Sharaf.

Ship comes under fire for 'delinquent behaviour'

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Promoting delinquent behaviour is against our nation's moral beliefs and obligations." Ma'an and Aqaba Deputy Bader Riati stated Monday regarding the ship 'Monte Carlo', docked in the Gulf of Aqaba.

Yesterday's statement came following his first mention of the ship to the Lower House of Parliament on Jan. 26.

The tourist ship 'Monte Carlo' reached Aqaba bearing the Panamanian flag on Dec. 24, 1996 and was described by its agents, the National Shipping Services Corporation as a floating restaurant intended to promote tourism. It was initially granted permission by local authorities to dock at the Aqaba port, but shortly thereafter was moved to the Northern port allowing access only via dinghies and other small craft.

In a vociferous statement presented to Parliament and in Al Urdun Arabic weekly, Mr. Riati stated that the ship was being used for solicitation purposes and other illegal and religiously prohibited acts. He demanded that the government take necessary action to evict the vessel from Jordanian territory.

Mr. Riati proceeded to pass all documented evidence of the ship's alleged activities to Al Urdun which published the details in full.

According to the information provided by Mr. Riati to Al Urdun, "the ship is a venue for gambling activities, the solicitation of 'personal massages', dancing and other such 'entertainment' activities."

"The ship also has a strip bar, a disco, saunas and a restaurant", he added.

For these services, the ship charges an annual membership fee of JD 1,100 and members are allowed to bring one guest. Access to the ship is also possible via special invitation from the ship's crew, Mr. Riati told Al Urdun weekly.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Mr. Riati said that the ship's crew was mainly of foreign origin but that a few Jordanians were employed on board.

Guests and customers board the ship from the Northern port before it sails outside Jordanian waters where 'promiscuous' activities begin, he added.

Mr. Riati continued "we encourage tourism and welcome tourists, yet we need them to understand and respect our values, customs and morals."

"Permitting and/or advocating delinquency is against our religious and moral beliefs and is therefore unacceptable," he said.

'Muslims born before 1941 may participate in pilgrimage'

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi Monday announced that Jordanian Muslims born before 1941 would be allowed to perform this year's pilgrimage to Mecca.

Addressing a press conference to discuss pilgrimage arrangements, Dr. Abbadi said the first convoy of pilgrims will leave Jordan for Mecca and Medina on March 29. He said the other transport vehicles will depart over the following three days.

He said round-trip transport on non-airconditioned buses will cost JD 110, and the cost for travel on air-conditioned buses will be JD 150.

Dr. Abbadi said costs for the entire trip, including accommodation, ranges from JD 473 to JD 488.

According to Dr. Abbadi, the ministry will ensure that the companies provide transportation and accommodation for the pilgrims, meet their service obligations and abide by ministry's regulations.

He said the ministry has been in contact with Saudi Arabian authorities to guarantee appropriate facilities for the pilgrims.

The minister said the worshippers will be housed in homes about two kilometres away from the holy shrines.

He stressed that all of the buses transporting the pilgrims are 1994 models, with some even more modern, and that they are adequately comfortable.

The ministry plans to open several medical centres close to the pilgrims' homes in Mecca and Medina and along the pilgrimage route which passes through Maan and other towns in southern Jordan.

The pilgrimage precedes the Islamic celebration of Eid al Adha (feast of sacrifice) which this year falls on April 17.

Abattoir under construction in Karak

QATRANEH (Petra) — A new poultry slaughterhouse is being constructed in the Qatraneh village of the Karak governorate at a projected cost of JD 10 million, Project Manager Walid Abu Ajamieb said Monday.

It is expected to be operative by the end of next month.

The project is being implemented by the National Poultry Slaughter-House Company and will boast a daily production of 60 tonnes of poultry, accounting for one-third of the country's daily demand, he stated.

The project is being constructed on 17,000 square metres and comprises a centre for producing animal feed concentrates, a refrigeration facility able to accommodate 3,000 tonnes of frozen poultry and 500 tonnes of newly slaughtered birds destined for market.

Mr. Abu Ajamieb described the centre as designed to produce 12 tonnes of feed to be sold at competitive prices.

He added that a waste-water treatment plant has been installed to process up to 800 cubic metres of water each day to be used to irrigate fruit trees at the site.

At least 200 Jordanian workers, technicians and engineers will be employed in the construction. Mr. Abu Ajamieh said, adding that a Dutch company is supplying equipment and will offer technical training to local workers.

The local market often lacks sufficient poultry in winter, he said, and the company will help poultry farmers market their product by buying all poultry raised in the Karak, Tafileh, Madaba, Aqaba, Maan and southern Amman regions, then market the meat in different parts of the country.

Four killed in road accident

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Four people were killed Sunday, and five more were listed in critical condition, following a road accident on the Jerash-Mafraq road, official reports said.

The accident which involved a pick-up truck and a rented car in the Hamamet Amoush area was attributed to speeding on the part of the truck driver, according to police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

"The driver of the pick-up lost control of his vehicle due to high velocity and slammed into the rented car next to him," the report said.

The deceased were identified by official reports as Imad Nafeh Abdul Aziz, 27, his 21-year-old brother Adnan, Khalid Bashir Jardat, 21, and Yousef Izzidin, 27.

This is the third tragic road accident to take place in the Kingdom this year.

On Jan. 23, five people were killed and dozens were injured in a road accident which involved two passenger buses in the Jordan Valley.

Man dies from oxygen deprivation

In other accidents in the Kingdom on Monday, a 28-year-old man was killed and another was listed in coma after suffering oxygen deprivation, according to official reports.

The reports said that the two men had went to sleep in a small room with a wood barrel left burning, the reports said.

"The room was too small and because there was not enough air circulating, the oxygen was consumed and it caused the two men to suffocate," a CDD official said.

The deceased was identified by police reports as Abdul Fattah Jawdat.

In December of 1995, four Egyptian nationals died tragically in North Marka after inhaling carbon monoxide.

The men had gone to sleep with wood burning in a barrel in their room.

In a rare incident in Ma'an, a 14-year-old shepherd girl Monday was listed in serious condition after being bitten by a camel in the Mreigbah area, police reports said.

The report said that Najah Smeihan was grazing the camels, when one approached her and bit her in the face.

She was rushed to Ma'an Government Hospital and her condition was listed as serious.

What's Going On

CONCERT

* Suhur-concert by Tunisian singer Lutfi Boushnaq at the Inter.Continental Hotel at 9:00 p.m.

PLAY

*" A Night of Fantasy" (Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Plastic art by Egyptian artist Mohmmad Abdul Rahim at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Feb. 6.

* Ramdaniat exhibition from Wadi Dana Nature Reserve (silver nature jewelery, jams, dried fruits) and Jordan River Designs (JRD) ornaments (tabelcloths, candles, embroidered accessories) at JRD showroom, Jabal Amman, Frist Circle (Tel. 613081), until Feb. 10.

* Exhibition on the "Institute of the Arab World in Paris" at the French Cultural Centre, until Feb. 6.

*Works by contemporary Arab artists entitled "The New Collection" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, (Tel. 643251/2), until Feb. 27.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE
NATIONAL DAY OF SRI LANKA,
ALLIED SHIPPING AGENCIES
AND ALLIED TRAVEL AND
TOURISM CONVEY
deepest congratulations and best wishes for success and prosperity to the people and His Excellency the Ambassador of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

7 more killed in Algerian raid

PARIS (R) — Algerian security forces said seven people had been assassinated at the weekend in Blida province, a stronghold of fundamentalists, bringing to 38 the number reported killed in two days in Algeria.

In a statement late Sunday, Algerian security officials said the seven were "assassinated in a cowardly way" — their usual term for those killed by having their throats cut.

The statement, carried by the official Algerian News Agency (APS), did not say who killed the people late Saturday or early Sunday in Larbaa district, Blida province, which lies some 50 kilometres south of the capital Algiers.

On Sunday, the usually well-informed Algerian newspaper Al Watan said 31 people were killed, also in Blida province, over Friday night.

That massacre was confirmed by a source close to the security forces who said they believed the 31 belonged to five families all related to a dissident member of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA).

"He was Sid Ali Bouhdgar, who split from the GIA and had formed his own group," the source said from Algiers, suggesting the GIA carried out the attack.

The authorities made no immediate comment on the killing.

The deaths of the seven people bring to more than 230 the number of those reported killed during the fasting month of Ramadan.

Ramadan started on Jan. 10. Days earlier, the GIA, the most ruthless of the Algerian fundamentalist groups, warned that it would step up attacks during the month.

On Friday, as Algeria mourned the assassination of its most powerful trade union leader Abdul Haq Ben Hamouda, security forces said eight people had been killed in nearby Sidi Moussa during late Wednesday or early Thursday.

Algeria's conflict erupted in early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamic Salvation Front had taken a huge lead. About 60,000 people have since died.

Meanwhile, French Prime Minister Alain Juppe said Monday Algeria's proposed parliamentary elections should be open to all legal democratic parties, which excluded the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

"The only party we support in Algeria is the party of democracy ... legal political groups must take part in this election," he told France Inter Radio in an interview.

Asked whether the FIS was among democratic parties, he said: "As long as you use bombs, car-bombs and knives you are not a party backing democratic values."

Mr. Juppe voiced horror at worsening violence in the former French colony, and compassion for its population, adding France had no desire to interfere in Algerian affairs.

Former French President Valery Giscard D'Estaing drew angry charges of interference from Algiers last week by calling for Islamists to be allowed to take part in the election.

French Foreign Minister Herve De Charette telephoned his Algerian colleague Ahmad Attaf Sunday to try to defuse a row over whether Paris was meddling in the North African country where civil strife has claimed 60,000 lives in five years.

He told Mr. Attaf that France's official policy of non-interference in Algeria had not changed, a French ministry statement said.

Mr. De Charette also said he would adopt the principles that Mr. Attaf wanted to guide Franco-Algerian relations — "mutual respect based on non-interference, a balance of interests and coordination on matters of mutual interest," it said.

French Socialist opposition leader Lionel Jospin has urged France to consult its European partners on a joint initiative, saying no one dared to discuss the conflict while Paris stayed silent about Algeria, which won independence from France in 1962 after a bloody war.

Violence flared in Algeria after authorities cancelled a 1992 election which the FIS was poised to win.

Angry students stop a car, trying to pass a barricade at a street blocked by protesters in the Bulgarian capital Monday. A fresh offer by Bulgaria's ruling Socialists for talks on a coalition government was rejected and the party now looks set to form an all-Socialist cabinet despite widespread opposition. Protesters blocked main roads around Bulgaria Monday in reaction against a second Socialist government (Reuter photo)

Bulgarian protesters disrupt Sofia rush hour

SOFIA (R) — Opposition supporters blocked rush hour traffic in the Bulgarian capital Monday morning as protests to demand a general election entered their fifth week.

Sofia public transport went on strike and students blocked main road junctions. In bright morning sunshine, they played football and volleyball on the Eagles Bridge, which is normally choked with early morning traffic.

Many commuters were sympathetic to the disruption. "If walking is what it takes to bring the communists down from power, I'll walk until the end of the year," said a middle-aged housewife.

The ex-Communist Socialists were expected to announce a new cabinet later Monday. The main opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) Sunday declined their last-minute offer of more talks on a coalition, saying they must first hand back their mandate.

Protesters blocked main roads around the country and held strikes in factories and coal mines. In Bulgaria's second city of Plovdiv, public transport stopped work and the UDF mayor appealed to citizens to turn out and join a planned blockade of main roads around the city.

State news agency BTA said a six-day blockade of road and rail links between Bulgaria and Greece had prevented more than 1,000 freight wagons carrying food, coal, liquid fuels and medicine from entering the country.

Miners at the Maritsa-Iztok mines, which supply Bulgaria's thermal power stations, began a strike Saturday evening, while distribution workers at Neftochim, Bulgaria's largest oil refinery, started one-hour daily stoppages Thursday.

Several towns have complained of fuel and bread shortages.

Protesters at the town of Doupnitsa, 60 kilometres south of Sofia, kept up their day and night blockade of road and rail links to Greece which began last Wednesday. "People are determined to stay until the Socialists give up," said UDF spokeswoman Vessilka Ousheva in Doupnitsa.

Bulgaria's government has been paralysed since December when Socialist Prime Minister Zhan Videnov resigned after months of criticism of his handling of the economy.

While the Balkan state has sunk further into crisis, urgent legislation has been left unattended such as voting the 1997 budget and setting up a tough fixed exchange rate regime to restore confidence in the national currency.

Both the European Union and the International Monetary Fund have said that there can be no efforts to help Bulgaria out of crisis until a stable government is in place.

The Socialists have an absolute majority in parliament and barring defections, should be able to win a vote of confidence for their cabinet Tuesday, but many people fear a repeat of the violence which broke out between police and demonstrators who besieged and ransacked the legislature on Jan. 10.

Mr. Dobrev tried Friday to propose a compromise way out but failed to win the backing of the party leadership.

In an apparently unrelated development, former military Prosecutor Colonel Lilko Yotsov and his wife were badly wounded by a bomb which exploded in their car Monday. Car-bombs are frequently used to settle scores in Bulgaria, where the crime rate has soared since the end of Communist rule in 1989.

ASEAN will not discuss East Timor issue at Europe meeting

SINGAPORE (R) — Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will block any attempt by Europe to raise the East Timor issue at a ministerial meeting next week but is ready to discuss the situation in Burma, Singapore Foreign Ministry officials said Monday.

"On Myanmar (Burma), there will be a discussion but on East Timor there will not be a discussion," a senior official told a news briefing ahead of the 12th ASEAN-European Union (EU) ministerial meeting in Singapore on Feb. 13-14.

"The Indonesians have told us as co-chairmen that if the East Timor issue is raised by the Portuguese, they would walk out," said the official, who declined to be identified.

He said Indonesia's position was that East Timor should be discussed under United Nations auspices and in bilateral talks with Portugal.

Indonesia had a very strong mandate on this issue from ASEAN heads of government at their informal summit on Nov. 30, the official said.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Portugal had not assured Singapore it would not raise the East Timor issue, the official said. But ASEAN had made clear to the EU presidency and EU members that the "whole relationship would be seriously affected" if the issue is raised.

Despite the difficult issues on human rights "indications are good that there will be a substantive, forward-looking joint declaration after the meeting," he said.

The EU has been critical of Burma's human rights record and ASEAN's relations with Rangoon's military junta.

Indonesia has been accused of human rights violations in East Timor, which it invaded shortly after Portugal abandoned it in 1975. Indonesian rule of East Timor has never been recognised by the U.N., which regards Portugal as the administering power.

The official said this month's meeting would seek to push forward the economic relationship between the two blocs.

Progress on this was thwarted at their last meeting, in Germany in 1994, because of the East Timor issue, he said.

The ASEAN-EU meeting will be followed on Feb. 15 by the first Asia-Europe foreign ministers meeting (ASEM). The former is bloc-to-bloc while ASEM is an inter-governmental forum of individual ASEAN members with China, South Korea, Japan and the 15-nation EU.

Because of this, if Burma joins ASEAN, it would not automatically become an ASEM member, another official said.

The political dialogue at ASEM would look at global issues and at economic cooperation, she said.

Singapore Foreign Ministry figures show ASEAN-EU trade rose to $9.5 billion in 1995, up from $75.7 billion in 1994.

Economic matters among ASEM members will be discussed further in September at an economic ministers meeting in Tokyo and a finance ministers' conference in Thailand the same month.

The Singapore meeting will also launch the ASIA-Europe Foundation to promote cultural exchanges. Singapore's $1.0 million contribution to the foundation will be matched by France and Brunei, while Japan also pledged support, the official said.

New Cambodian political alliance sealed

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A new political alliance was launched Monday as the formerly Communist Cambodian People's Party (CPP) sealed a cooperation pact with the country's fourth-largest party.

The agreement links the 2.5 million-member CPP, led by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, to the 60,000-member Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) for the scheduled upcoming elections later this year and next.

Mr. Hun Sen told reporters his party expected to sign as many as 10 similar agreements with other small parties creating a loose alliance that observers see as a foil to the national united front, created last month by the royalist FUNCINPEC Party.

"We intend to cooperate together in order to maintain political and social stability and ... build the country," Mr. Hun Sen said, adding that the CPP would be willing to sign an agreement with FUNCINPEC but he was unsure that FUNCINPEC would agree.

Tension between the two parties, former battlefield enemies which are now the main partners in the current coalition government, has been running high recently as has personal animosity between Mr. Hun Sen and FUNCINPEC president and First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

"We are not sure whether FUNCINPEC will accept the proposal," Mr. Hun Sen said, noting the agreement has a clause stating that the signatories may not protest against decisions made by the other.

"It is difficult for me to smile at you while you step on my foot," he said in a reference to what has become routine sniping between CPP and FUNCINPEC officials.

The royalist front, known by its French acronym FUN, includes FUNCINPEC, dissident Sam Rainsy's unrecognised opposition Khmer Nation Party (KNP), a faction of the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP) and the Democratic National Union Movement (DNUM).

Despite agreeing with the principles of the front, the BLDP faction, led by the party's octogenarian founder Son Sann, and the DNUM, now led by former Khmer Rouge Deputy Premier Ieng Sary, have said they are wary of losing their independence and have publically denied formally joining FUN.

Suu Kyi alleges Burmese minister called for her death

RANGOON (AFP) — Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi alleged Monday that a Burmese government minister had encouraged junta supporters to murder her.

The minister was not immediately available for comment.

She alleged that Railways Minister Win Sein had, during a recent talk upcountry to members of the pro-junta Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA), "roughly told them to kill, that I should be killed."

Referring to the checkpoints which the junta said it had put up for her protection on roads leading to her home, Mrs. Suu Kyi said: "If I need to be protected from anybody, it's from a minister like that. It's from members of the government."

On Nov. 9, Mrs. Suu Kyi's motorcade came under attack from a mob wielding sticks and stones.

She and her opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) accused the USDA of mounting the attack, while the junta suggested that the attack focused on security officials, implying that the NLD supporters were behind it.

She told reporters who were allowed to pass through the checkpoints to attend a news conference at the compound that the NLD had written a letter of protest to senior general Than Shwe.

Asked whether the allegation against the minister had been corroborated, the opposition leader said the information came from several different people who had been present at the talk.

Mrs. Suu Kyi described the general situation in Burma as "volatile," adding: "There is large-scale repression of the democracy movement going on with over 100 people arrested within a month."

Asked her reaction to the appointment of Madeleine Albright as the new U.S. secretary of state, she said Ms. Albright "is a friend of democracy so that I think is good for our movement.

"She has the right attitude towards human rights and democracy," Mrs. Suu Kyi said, but she cautioned that individual friendships could not weigh too heavily in international relations.

In September 1995, while the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, the outspoken Albright made a high-profile trip to Burma during which she lectured junta members on human rights and political liberties. Referring to Western calls for sanctions against Burma's military rulers, Mrs. Suu Kyi noted Monday that conditions in the country were "such that they would meet requirements for sanctions."

Meanwhile, Burmese government troops were chased out of Thai territory by ethnic Karen fighters defending refugees camps on the Thai side of the border on two occasions over the weekend, Karen sources said Monday.

Forces of the Burmese junta were intercepted within about two kilometres of the Mae La refugee camp late Saturday, and again early Sunday, the Karen National Union (KNU) said in a statement received Monday.

The clashes in Thailand's western Tak province, opposite Burma's Karen state, were confirmed by the Karen refugee committee and the commander of the Thai army's Fourth Regiment Border Task Force, reached by telephone in Tak.

"The fighting took place on both sides of the border," Colonel Suwit Maenmuan told AFP.

Two refugee camps housing more than 10,000 refugees were looted and burned by rival Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) soldiers operating from territory near Burmese government bases last week.

Guatemala military police end 5-day rebellion

GUATEMALA CITY (R) — Hundreds of Guatemalan military police ended a tense, five-day rebellion over terms of a peace treaty Sunday, although regular army troops remained on alert in case of a renewed outbreak of skirmishes.

Troops and armoured vehicles maintained positions around a military police barracks, but the police confirmed they had ended their rebellion. One general who was taken hostage at the barracks Saturday was released Sunday morning.

Small tanks roamed around the barracks and soldiers manned a 150-mm cannon trained on the large, grey fortified building. Rebellious military police either went back to work or took the day off.

"Everything has normalised. It's like any weekend here. Some of us went to work and some are at home resting," one military policeman told Reuters.

There was no formal laying down of arms by the military police, although the government had stipulated the unit must turn in their weapons for negotiations to start.

"Our personnel came to a peaceful understanding that the solution to this problem was to turn in their weapons. They will start coming out as civilians and we will restore services," Major Julio Cesar Linares of the military police told reporters.

Army troops and tanks had surrounded the barracks Saturday night as hundreds of disgruntled military police holding the fortified compound demanded government negotiators promise them severance pay when they lose their jobs later this year.

So tense was the stand-off that troops and rebellious military police had a brief exchange of fire late Saturday. No one was hurt.

The entire 4,000-member Military Police Force will be disbanded this year as part of drastic army cuts the government promised when it signed peace accords on Dec. 29 with leftist rebels the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (URNG).

The army has played a pivotal and at times brutal role in political life for much of Guatemala's recent history. Decades of civil wars claimed an estimated 140,000 lives, including many poor Indian civilians killed in army counter-insurgency campaigns.

The military police rebellion this week marked the first sign of military discontent over terms of the breakthrough peace accord.

Until Saturday, the government had played down the insubordination. A presidential spokesman had called it a "labour dispute." But Sunday army spokesman Colonel Otto Noack said the army had decided the uprising was a criminal act of rebellion.

Military police commander Leonel De Leon Guillen met Sunday morning with Defence Minister Julio Balconi. Mr. Noack said the meeting was informational, not a negotiation.

According to Mr. Noack, Mr. Balconi told ex-president Ramiro De Leon Carpio, who also intervened to resolve the rebellion, that the government would not negotiate unless the military police turned in their weapons.

Approximately 400 military police, fewer than half of the number housed in the barracks, had refused to turn in their assault rifles and machineguns since Wednesday.

2 held, dynamite seized in U.S. bomb probe

VALLEJO, California (R) — Police said they seized 230 kilogrammes of dynamite Sunday and arrested two men suspected of carrying out bombings to subvert the justice system.

A joint federal-local task force was still searching for a third suspect in connection with two bomb attacks that rocked the town of Vallejo, 50 kilometres northeast of San Francisco, in the last week. A third bomb that was disarmed.

Vallejo police chief Robert Nichelini said police believed the bombers' aim was to "stop the criminal justice system from operating in Solano County," where Vallejo is located.

He said police believed the bombings were carried out in "an attempt to stop pending hearings," but he would not say if the suspects were involved in any criminal cases. The suspects acted together but were not "any sort of a militia group," he said.

Police found the huge haul of dynamite in a garage while searching a house in Vallejo Sunday evening. "We located approximately 500 pounds of dynamite in individual sticks.

That translates to about five or six cases of dynamite," Vallejo police Lieutenant Ron Jackson said.

Police ordered residents to evacuate nearby houses as a safety precaution while they removed the dynamite.

Vallejo police said they arrested one suspect, Francis Ernestberg, 40, at a house in Vallejo early Sunday. He was booked into Solano County jail for investigation of conspiracy, explosives violations and burglary, they said.

Police also found a car with 61 sticks of dynamite in the trunk. The suspects were apparently planning to use the car in a bomb attack that could have been catastrophic, investigators said.

Later Sunday, police arrested a second suspect, Oston Osotonu, 24, who was booked into jail on a no-bail warrant. He was charged with conspiracy and explosives violations, police said.

Police said they were still searching for a third suspect, Vallejo resident Kevin Robinson, 29, who is wanted on suspicion of conspiracy and explosives violations. They said he was considered armed and dangerous.

Police said the dynamite they recovered had been stolen. They believed they had found most of the missing dynamite.

Two bombs exploded in Vallejo in the last week, one outside a courthouse and one outside a bank. Both pre-dawn bombings caused damage but no injuries.

Last weekend, police also found and disarmed a bomb containing at least 30 sticks of dynamite that had been placed outside a public library that houses a police evidence room.

Paul Snabel, special agent in charge of the San Francisco office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, said the explosives found in the car Sunday were "wired up and it was our understanding it was also to be used in a further attempt to subvert the justice system in Vallejo."

Mr. Snabel said the bombers apparently intended to drive the vehicle to a target and detonate it. Investigators said they did not know what the planned target was.

Nichelini said investigators believed the bank bombing may have been a diversion to throw the investigation off track and disguise the bombers' true motive.

Serbian crisis enters dangerous new phase

BELGRADE (Agencies) — Serbia's political crisis lurched into a dangerous new phase Monday after riot police beat pro-democracy protesters in the government's fiercest response yet to 11 weeks of street rallies.

There were fears of more violence, but analysts cautioned that Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic is highly unpredictable.

Still, one opposition leader, Vuk Draskovic, called on his people to be ready to defend themselves if police attacked again at a rally planned for later Monday.

At least 80 people were injured overnight when the police, armed with truncheons and water cannon, set upon demonstrators who had gathered on both ends of brotherhood and unity bridge in Belgrade.

One of those beaten was Vesna Pesic, 56, another of the three leaders of an opposition coalition called Together. She said she had suffered bruises in the thigh and back.

The charge by helmeted police in dark grey uniforms came as opposition leaders said they were expecting government proposals aimed at ending the strongest challenge yet to Mr. Milosevic, the wily autocrat who runs Eastern Europe's last Communist-style regime.

The protests were touched off when the government annulled a series of opposition wins in local elections in November, but they reflect a broader desire for sweeping democratic reforms like an easing of the goverment stranglehold on the media.

With more protests due Monday, the 76th straight day of the protest movement, commentators and diplomats said more violence was possible.

"Milosevic is going in the direction of open dictatorship," said Stojan Cerovic, an editorial writer for the respected independent news weekly Vreme, adding that the regime might even declare a state of emergency.

Sunday night's violence, he said, is "the first step in a very bad direction."

One Western diplomat said Mr. Milosevic had apparently concluded that because the demonstrations are sparking calls for costly strikes, the protests had to stop. Teachers, for instance, who earn as little as $150 a month, are threatening a general strike to demand more money.

"They seem to feel they can no longer afford these demonstrations to go on day after day," the diplomat said of Mr. Milosevic and his government, speaking on condition of anonymity.

He added that the violence was deplorable, particularly the fact that Pesic, seen by many in the West as Serbia's most palatable opposition leader, was beaten.

"Pesic is the epitome of peaceful protest," he said. In early reaction, France and Germany condemned the police action and urged the Serbian government to avoid a replay.

Hospital officials put Sunday night's injury toll at around 80. They said all but two of these people — a woman with a broken arm and a man whose nose and hand were broken — were treated and released.

An official at a private clinic said up to 10 of those injured were police.

Mr. Draskovic, who leads a moderate Nationalist Party, urged his people to hit the streets again Monday.

"We will demonstrate peacefully against the crime of the police, but if you are attacked, citizens, be prepared to defend your dignity and honour," he said over Radio Index.

Before this incident, the worst case of violence came on Dec. 24 when demonstrators clashed with government supporters brought to the capital by the regime in buses or trains. One person was killed and 91 were injured.

There have also been other incidents of police beatings in Belgrade and other cities, but they paled by comparison to Sunday's attack.

Another leader of the Together Coalition, Zoran Djindjic, told AFP Sunday that he expected the government to make a proposal in two or three days in a bid to end the crisis.

But he insisted that recognition of the opposition electoral wins was no longer enough, saying the Serbian people wanted real reforms.

"Without major changes, there will be no peace here," Mr. Djindjic said.

"The discontent is so deep that no cosmetic gesture can ease it," Mr. Djindjic said, "and recognition of the election results would change nothing." Mr. Djindjic said Monday on radio here he had called off plans to travel to the Davos economic forum in Switzerland, where he was to brief international delegates on the Serbian opposition's demands. "I decided to cancel my visit to Davos because of the police brutality against peaceful demonstrators," he said.

Under intense international pressure, the government has reinstated opposition wins in five of the 14 cities and towns where it annulled the results on grounds of unspecified irregularities, but not in Belgrade.

Meanwhile, France, condemning police repression of pro-democracy protesters in Belgrade, invited the three leaders of Serbia's opposition coalition to visit Paris as soon as possible in a significant policy switch.

"This invitation amounts to recognition by the French government of the leaders of the Zadejno opposition coalition, which through the past weeks has proved its political maturity," French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said in a statement.

"I have decided to invite the three leaders of the democratic opposition in Belgrade, Mr. Zoran Djindjic, Vuk Draskovic and Mrs. Vesna Pesic to come to Paris as soon as possible," Mr. De Charette said.

He said France condemned "with the utmost firmness" Sunday's police violence against peaceful demonstrators who have been protesting for weeks at alleged election fraud by the hardline socialist government of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

"(France) solemnly warns the Serbian authorities against a slide into violence which can only lead to a disastrous outcome for their country," Mr. De Charette said. The explicit recognition of the opposition was a departure from Paris's previously cautious stance.

He said Belgrade must abide by the conclusions of an Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission led by former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez and accept the opposition victory in last year's disputed municipal elections.

A Serbian opposition supporter runs away from a riot police water cannon during an anti-government protest at the bridge over the Sava River in Belgrade Sunday. Serbian anti-riot police using water cannons, batons and shields forcibly cleared demonstrators from the bridge after an angry stand-off (Reuter photo)

Back off from closer Europe, Rifkind says

LONDON (R) — Two senior British ministers appealed Monday for a slowing-down of the movement towards closer integration in the European Union (EU).

In a speech in Stockholm, Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said: "I do not believe this pace of change can be sustained."

Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke, predicting that the Jan. 1, 1999 date for the launch of a single European currency could soon be put back, urged EU states committed to the idea to temper their enthusiasm with common sense.

Europe should not be rolling inexorably towards federal-type unity but should instead be broadening its horizons and easing members into cooperation, Mr. Rifkind told the Swedish Institute of International Affairs.

Making the first in a series of speeches in European capitals to explain Britain's view of Europe, he said too many changes were being made too fast — from the 1986 Single European Act to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty on closer integration.

Britain's ruling Conservatives are desperately trying to present a united front ahead of a looming general election despite bitter splits between pro-Europeans and Eurosceptics. Mr. Rifkind tried to present a common ground for the two factions.

"Britain's vision for Europe is not one of rolling integration toward a single federal destiny. It is about finding the right balance between supernationalism and inter-governmentalism using supernationalism where it is necessary, but only where it is necessary," he said.

"Our vision of the EU 10 years from now is of a union enlarged to represent almost all of Europe, not just its wealthy western half," he added. What he called "supranational integration" was good in some areas, Mr. Rifkind conceded.

"We need it to sustain the single market, the competition and state aid regimes, the common agricultural and fisheries policies."

Cooperation also made sense in fighting drug trafficking, for example, or on visa policies, Mr. Rifkind said.

"But these areas are different from the single market or the common agricultural policy," he added.

"They go to the heart of the relationship between the citizen and the state. It may be that in some countries people are ready to have a European police force patrolling their streets, to be subject to arrest and detention by European justice authorities...but in Britain they are not."

Mr. Clarke, speaking from Davos, Switzerland to British Broadcasting (BBC) Radio. Recognised there was a strong political will across much of continental Europe to go ahead with a single currency.

"But in my view that should be combined with common sense," he said. "Nobody should contemplate EMU (Economic and Monetary Union) unless countries are genuinely convergent and are going to stay convergent in the economic conditions."

Mr. Clarke said it was unlikely that enough EU states would have convergent economies in time for the new currency to be launched on the planned date.

"Personally I think there will be a postponement of it. Perhaps in a few months, perhaps a little after that," he said.

Sri Lanka steps up alert ahead of anniversary

COLOMBO (AFP) — Police and security forces further strengthened security in the heavily guarded Sri Lankan capital Colombo ahead of the independence anniversary on Tuesday, officials said.

More armed personnel were deployed in and around the city after a day of heavy fighting in the island's embattled northern and eastern regions left at least 71 people dead on Sunday, officials said.

"There will be parking restrictions and several roads used by the presidential motorcade will be closed for other road users due to security reasons," a senior police officer said.

On Friday, a suspected woman cadre of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), committed suicide when she was stopped at a routine police check point.

Suicide bombers are a trade mark of the LTTE and police issued an alert for six Tiger suicide cadres who are believed to have infiltrated the capital to carry out attacks.

Officials said that a man connected with the woman had been arrested in the north-eastern town of Trincomalee over the weekend and was being questioned about rebel activities in the capital.

The Tiger rebels escalated their attacks against security forces Sunday, killing at least 27 government soldiers and three civilians. Defence officials claimed killing over 40 rebels.

The upsurge in violence came amid a nationwide security alert for ltte attacks ahead of the country's 49th anniversary of independence from Britain Tuesday.

Tiger guerrillas who are leading a drawn out campaign for an independent homeland in the island's northern and eastern regions have overrun several small military units in the region.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in fighting in the past 24 years.

Major sees solution in Franco-U.S. spat over NATO

PARIS (R) — British Prime Minister John Major said in an interview published in Paris Monday he believed a settlement would be found to a Franco-American spat over control of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) commands.

"I believe a solution that will address our common main aims will be found," Mr. Major told the newspaper Le Figaro.

"The future (NATO command) structure will have to be efficient militarily. It will have to address European aspirations but also have wide political support in the United States.

"It will have to express a coherent and visible European identity with new tasks and even more influence (devolved to Europeans). I strongly hope France will fully regain its place in NATO because both France and Europe will gain from this," he said.

Paris and Washington have been deadlocked for several months over a French demand that a European officer take over NATO's Southern Command as part of a drive to give European nations greater responsibility for their own defence.

The Naples-based command controls allied forces in the Mediterranean including Bosnia.

Britain has taken a cautious stand in the dispute though French officials say London ultimately backs Washington's position.

French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said Sunday Paris might fail to persuade Washington to let a European take over the Naples command from an American.

Washington last week publicly rejected a French compromise proposal to split the command, giving a U.S. admiral control over air-naval protection forces and a European territorial responsibility.

France, planning to make a full return to NATO's military command which it quit in 1966, wants European nations given a greater responsibility for their own defence.

In September, French Defence Minister Charles Millon threatened to freeze France's reintegration into NATO's military structure if it failed to get its way. Officials have not repeated that threat.

Tung faces tightrope act over Hong Kong laws

HONG KONG (R) — A Hong Kong member of the Beijing-appointed caucus responsible for the transition of the British colony to Chinese rule offered a hint of compromise Monday in the row over civil liberties in the territory.

The Beijing-selected preparatory committee responsible for re-imposing Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong voted Saturday to roll back some of its laws, including part of the bill of rights, sparking a storm of protest.

"I don't expect the chief executive and the provisional legislature to put in the (former) draconian laws," academic and provisional committee member Lau Sui-Kai told Hong Kong Radio on Monday.

"I expect them to ... consult the Hong Kong people, otherwise both the chief executive's prestige and the chance of reelection of many provisional legislators will be harmed or seriously damaged."

The Provisional Legislature, which China will install in place of the elected chamber, a source of considerable controversy in Hong Kong, is expected to sit for about a year before new elections are called.

Seoul: Waste could harm N. Korean nuclear project

SEOUL (R) — The South Korean government could find it tough to secure money to finance nuclear plants in North Korea if Pyongyang accepts nuclear waste from Taiwan under a controversial deal, a senior Seoul official said Monday.

Deputy Foreign Minister Song Young-Shik stressed that Seoul was committed to footing the bulk of the multi-billion-dollar bill for the nuclear plants but parliament could still oppose the move.

"If a large amount of nuclear waste is allowed in the Korean peninsula...we are worried that this will have a negative impact when we seek public support and parliamentary approval for the huge project cost," he told reporters.

Taiwan's refusal to scrap a contract shipping up to 200,000 barrels of nuclear waste to the impoverished north has enraged many South Koreans.

South Korea has no verification North Korea could store the waste safely and that it is concerned about nuclear contamination of the peninsula.

Taiwanese Vice-President Lien Chan Saturday reaffirmed Taipei would not intervene in the waste shipment, saying it was a lawful, safe business deal with no moral issue involved.

The deal was signed by state-run Taiwan Power Co. and a North Korean agency on Jan. 11.

Mr. Song said although the main purpose of providing nuclear plants to the Stalinist north was to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, environmental concern had also been factored in when Seoul decided to support the project.

Under a landmark $4.5 billion nuclear deal between North Korea and the United States in 1994, Pyongyang would receive two light-water reactors and interim energy supplies in exchange for the north abandoning its suspected nuclear weapons programme.

Modern light-water reactors produce little of the weapons-grade plutonium needed to make nuclear weapons.

South Korea has since promised to bear most of the project's cost.

Australian premier to seek approval for republican vote

CANBERRA (R) — Australian Prime Minister John Howard will seek party approval Tuesday for a people's convention by year-end to consider whether the nation should become a republic, with a vote possible by the 1999 election.

Mr. Howard's cabinet has already approved the convention which would consider how Australia's constitutional monarchy can become a republic, replacing Britain's Queen Elizabeth with an Australian head-of-state, government sources said Monday.

The prime minister is due to seek party-room approval for the plan Tuesday, the sources said.

The move comes after recent fears that Mr. Howard, a staunch monarchist, was planning to abandon his 1996 election pledge to hold the convention this year and for half its delegates to be publicly elected. The remaining delegates would be appointed by the national and state governments.

Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer Monday would not say when an announcement on the convention would be made, but reaffirmed the government's commitment to its election promise.

"The core commitments of a convention, properly comprised, and a fair-dinkum (genuine) vote of the people, which we took to the elections last March, will definitely be provided," Mr. Fischer said in a radio interview.

"There will be no breaking of that word," Mr. Fischer said.

Opinion polls show about half of Australian voters want a republic, but also that they think the country faces more pressing problems. Many are uncommitted.

Support for a republic has grown as Australia's immigration intake shifts away from its traditional reliance on Britain as a source of new settlers.

Australia's former Labour government, ousted by Mr. Howard last year, fuelled the republic issue under outspoken Prime Minister Paul Keating. Mr. Keating, once condemned by the British media as the "Lizard of Oz" for touching the queen, sought to establish a republic before the centenary of federation in 2001.

Mr. Howard's conservative Liberal-National Coalition reluctantly agreed to take the issue to voters by the turn of the century and to involve the community in early consideration of the issue if it won government.

The 50 million Australian dollar ($38 million) people's convention will produce options for a republic to be voted on in a national plebiscite, but this vote would not be binding on the government.

The result of the plebiscite would form the basis of a national referendum, which would have to be passed by a majority of voters in a majority of the six states to change the constitution.

If the convention is held in December, as is now expected, the referendum could be held before or with the next national election due in March, 1999.

Republican leaders and media reports had warned Mr. Howard was delaying the consideration of a republic and considering having all convention delegates appointed by government.

The Labour opposition Monday urged Mr. Howard to "junk" the convention and put the issue to a direct popular vote, accusing the prime minister of trying to sabotage the process.

"I don't think Mr. Howard wants a republic and this is a way of unmercifully prolonging the process to ensure that it doesn't happen," deputy opposition leader Gareth Evans said.

New South Wales state opposition leader Peter Collins, a republican member of Mr. Howard's Liberal Party, warned last week of a growing perception that Mr. Howard was abandoning his pledge.

Juppe moves to stop extreme right

VITROLLES (AFP) — French Prime Minister Alain Juppe moved Monday to try to prevent the extreme right National Front from winning control of a fourth French city after it came top Sunday in the first round of a municipal by-election here.

Mr. Juppe and other leaders of the mainstream right all urged centre-right candidate Roger Guichard, of the Union for French Democracy (UDF), to withdraw from next Sunday's deciding round so as to avoid splitting the anti-front vote.

Mr. Guichard was due to announce his decision later Monday.

Mr. Juppe said on French radio "there should be no hesitation. Taking into account the results of the first round, we all want the list of the UDF candidate to withdraw."

Mr. Guichard won 16.3 per cent of the vote in Sunday's poll with 46.7 per cent for the National Front's Catherine Megret and 37 per cent for outgoing Socialist Mayor Jean-Jacques Anglade. Turnout was high at 76.78 per cent.

The National Front, which runs on a populist, violently anti-immigrant programme, already controls three other towns in southern France — the Mediterranean port of Toulon, the ancient Roman city of Orange and Marignane, which borders on Vitrolles and is home to Marseille Airport.

In Vitrolles, the Front improved its score on municipal elections in June, 1995, but failed to gain the 50 per cent that would have given it outright victory.

The by-election was seen as a test for the far-right party ahead of legislative elections scheduled for March 1998.

The by-election was called after a court overturned the outcome of the 1995 municipal poll in which Bruno Megret, the Front's deputy leader, was beaten by Mr. Anglade by the slim margin of 353 votes.

The court annulled the vote last December because of campaign overspending by Mr. Megret and because of irregularities on the part of the Socialist candidate. The court ruled that Mr. Megret was unfit to hold public office for a year, but permitted the Socialist candidate, Jean-Jacques Anglade to stand again.

In effect Mr. Megret fought the new campaign by proxy, persuading his wife to stand in his place.

On Monday he said Mr. Juppe and Urban Development Minister Jean-Claude Gaudin, of the UDF, "are covering themselves with shame" by seeking Mr. Guichard's withdrawal.

Mr. Megret resumed his campaign refrain which harped on the fact that Mr. Anglade has been indicted for fake invoicing, saying that Mr. Juppe and Mr. Gaudin had joined "the camp of the corrupt."

The Socialist Party itself called on the centre-right party to withdraw its list as the Socialists had done last November to prevent the National Front winning a municipal by-election at Dreux.

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Model to follow

AS RAMADAN draws to a close, it is time to give credit where it is due, mostly to those who devoted a great deal of time and effort to alleviating the suffering of the poor and helping the needy amongst us during this holy month. While the country witnessed many individual and group efforts to give alms and assistance to poverty-stricken Jordanians, Her Royal Highness Princess Basma's personal efforts in this domain deserve a special tribute and recognition.

Through the Queen Alia Fund, Princess Basma steered the campaign of Al bir and Al ihsan into new and unprecedented heights and gave it new dimensions that won her recognition by the people and profound appreciation by the less privileged. By making tireless field trips all over the country, especially where impoverishment rates are highest, she has given a fine example to those who make pious comments about the real message of Ramadan but do nothing tangible about it. Fasting, after all, is supposed to make all of us more sympathetic to the plight of the less fortunate and understanding of their deprivation and suffering. Staying hungry and thirsty from dawn to sunset aims to make everybody experience the agonies of hunger and thirst and in so doing lend valuable support to people who have to live with them.

What better way to express appreciation of the efforts being undertaken by such people of goodwill, charity and generosity than to call for widening the scope of their work by making it more permanent and institutionalised. The hungry people need attention, whether in terms of finding them jobs or just satisfying their immediate needs, not only during Ramadan but throughout the year. The fact that quite a few Jordanians need urgent help suggests that the country needs a more dynamic and systematic way of dealing with poverty.

The social security network that the government has been talking about, and working on with the World Bank and other friendly governments, has to start bearing fruit soon. It must provide an umbrella for those who need help and also others who are needy but do not seek assistance out in the open. How to reach the two categories must be the priority of all existing channels of assistance. Hopefully the experiences gained through this year's Ramadan could be built on in order to rectify all shortcomings experienced in the past years.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for **Al Ra'i** daily suggested the convening of an Arab summit meeting to deal with urgent issues at hand, including the war in Sudan, the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and the fate of Jerusalem. Mahmoud Rimawi said that in the face of the danger faced by Sudan, the Arab countries can collectively arrange for an end to the conflict by reconciling the Khartoum regime with the opposition groups and so avert the division of the Arab country. In view of the deadlock on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks, the Arab summit can chart a common Arab strategy for negotiations with Israel on these two tracks, guaranteeing the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Syrian and Lebanese territories, said the writer. But he said that most urgent is the need for the Arab leaders to come together in order to follow up on the Cairo-Arab summit resolutions which pledged that no Arab country will ever normalise relations with the Jewish state unless and until all occupied Arab territories, including Arab Jerusalem, have been returned to their owners. The writer stressed the need for a common Arab strategy that would safeguard the Arab and Islamic interests in the Holy City.

A WRITER for **Al Dustour** urged the Western countries to stop their economic and military aid to Israel now that it is stalling the implementation of peace accords, especially with the Palestinians. In the past decades, said Saleh Qallab, Israel used to receive enormous amounts of aid, of different kinds, from the Western countries, mainly the U.S., when the Arab countries surrounding Israel had not yet made peace with the Jewish state. But now, with the Arabs declaring openly, in deed rather than words, that they desire a lasting peace, and with Israel rejecting this bid and showing an adamant stand vis-à-vis the compliance with the peace requirements, the Western countries ought to reconsider their policies regarding aid to the Jewish state, said the writer. The Western nations have supported Israel in all its wars against the Arabs, in 1948, 1967 and 1973, because the Jewish state succeeded in depicting itself as a victim in these wars, added the writer. He said now that Israel is showing arrogance and obstinacy and refusing to make a lasting and just peace with the Arab countries, there is need for the Western countries to reconsider their position towards Israel and the Middle East in general.

The View from Fourth Circle

By Rami G. Khouri

Transforming, on the road from Madrid to Copenhagen

I WAS privileged last week to participate in a meeting in Copenhagen at which some 60 private individuals from Jordan, Palestine, Israel and Egypt, along with our Danish hosts and some colleagues from other European countries, launched the International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace. The Alliance aims to bring a private and popular dimension to the peace-making process that has been monopolised by governments to date. It will monitor progress in the peace talks, advocate for and pressure governments into concluding a balanced and fair peace and mobilise public opinion for these goals.

While the gathering was not a negotiation as such, it was as important as the current formal negotiations between official parties in one important respect: it provided a powerful vision of the very wide constituency for a just, balanced and comprehensive peace that exists in the region. The Copenhagen meeting reflected changing attitudes among Arabs and Israelis in three dimensions: the participants, the final declaration and the future thrust of action.

The gathering brought together representatives of most, but not all, major political groups in Israel and the Arab World; as expected, the mainstream political forces in Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and Israel were represented, but so were groups such as Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a moderate Orthodox/religious party in Israel and members of the Likud-led ruling coalition in Israel. As far as I can tell (and I have closely followed such meetings for over two decades), this was the most comprehensive, inclusive group of Arabs and Israelis ever to agree on a single political statement that broadly satisfied all sides.

The statement included the following key points: "Justice and equality are preconditions for peace...; we aim at the achievement of lasting and comprehensive peace based on the formula of land for peace, the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 in all their aspects...; we consider that the foundations for peace among the Arab and Israeli peoples should be based on equal and balanced rights for all...; Jerusalem, in particular, is a deeply sensitive and central issue to all parties. Special attention, should be paid to this issue in the final status negotiations to satisfy the requirements of all the parties...; the final agreement between Israel and the PLO must allow the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination, including statehood, in accordance with international laws upon reaching an agreed settlement on the final status between them...; to create an atmosphere of amity for negotiations, no resort to violence or terrorism in any form should be accepted or condoned. To allay Palestinian fears, no new settlements should be built, and no Palestinian land, state or private, will be expropriated...; (the Israeli/Syrian-Lebanese) settlement must include maximum mutual security for the parties as well as normal relations between them..."

Of course, some of the participants had reservations about some of the points in the final declaration, and this agreement on broad goals does not mean that the parties will agree easily on specific arrangements for core issues like borders, refugees, water, settlements and Jerusalem. Yet, by accepting and signing the declaration, all the participants manifested the important new factor that defines peace making in the Middle East today, as compared to one or two decades ago: the willingness to accept the reasonable demands of the other side if one's own reasonable demands are accepted simultaneously by the other side. Thus, Israelis from the left and right, the secular and the religious, sign on to Palestinian statehood and a negotiated status for Jerusalem that "satisfies the requirements of all the parties"; at the same time, Palestinians and other Arabs, spanning the entire political spectrum, sign on to full recognition and security for Israel and normal relations with it, along with recognition of Israeli rights in Jerusalem.

This reflects a very significant turning point in peace making: in effect, each party is recognising the other side's rights and final status demands, and both then agree to work backwards from there to negotiate the details of how occupation and violence can end and final status rights can be achieved. So many, varied political groups attended and signed at Copenhagen because their ultimate goals and their humanity were acknowledged and accepted, based on the principles of reciprocity, simultaneity and equality. A broad win-win scenario was offered, which did not require either side to be humiliated, and thus an unusual consensus was achieved.

Also important is the Alliance's determination to bring public pressure to bear on governments, so that the promise of a just peace is not lost. The forging of public links among like-minded activists for justice and peace across the Arab-Israeli divide may prove to be a historic development — if it results in a regional political consensus based on humanistic and universal political values and rights, rather than on narrow national, tribal or religious identities.

Powerful lessons can and must be learned from the Copenhagen meeting and declaration. The first is about people's capacity to change, and to accept positions and options that they have refused in the past. The second is about the importance of respect as a means of fostering change; the Copenhagen consensus emerged because the two sides approached one another with the intention of achieving the rights of both sides, at the exclusive expense of neither side. The third lesson is about inclusion, without preconceptions: all Arab and Israeli parties to the conflict must be brought into the talks if we hope to achieve lasting peace and real reconciliation, and no faction, however hardline or violent in the past, should be denied an opportunity to forge a new and better future. The fourth lesson is about moderation, compromise and pragmatism; both sides will achieve most of their important demands, but to do so they must moderate some of their positions. And the fifth, and perhaps most important lesson, is that there is no shame in moderation and compromise, if these are invoked to achieve equal national and personal rights for all concerned, and stability and progress for the Mideast region as a whole.

The Copenhagen consensus is all the more relevant in the wake of the Israeli-Palestinian Hebron protocol, which brings together the application of these five principles or lessons. The Hebron protocol was approved by 81 members of the Israeli parliament. This is in dramatic contrast to the 61 (out of 120) Israeli parliamentarians who voted for the Oslo agreement several years ago when it was presented to the parliament by Yitzhak Rabin. The recent, slow change under way among Arabs and Israelis can be traced in a very direct and vivid manner: from the vague, obstinate fears of the Madrid conference's opening lectures in 1991, to the more resigned, flexible probing of the 1993 Oslo declaration of principles, to the bold sincerity of the Jordanian-Israeli Washington Declaration of July 1994, to the bilateral precision and quiet normalisation of the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty signed in Wadi Araba, to the historic, practical and difficult compromises on the ground in the 1997 Hebron protocol, which was the first ideologically significant bilateral disengagement between Arabs and Israelis.

A successful conclusion of the peace process requires another ideological and emotional leap forward towards the principles that were so important at Copenhagen — principles that reflect what Israeli columnist Sever Plotzker last week called "a transformation in the existential outlook of us all" (noting that public opinion in Israel was more concerned with the high salaries of senior officials in local municipalities and public companies than with the Israeli withdrawal from most of Hebron). Madrid, Oslo, Washington, Wadi Araba and Hebron, have all been milestones on this slow journey of transformation. Copenhagen suggests a possible route to its fruitful conclusion.

'Noam Friedman et al — symptoms of a larger and more destructive phenomenon'

By Marda Dunsky

WITH ANOTHER bloody scenario played out in Hebron recently, it may seem comforting to know that the shooting spree of off-duty Israeli soldier Noam Friedman was the deed of a man with a history of psychiatric problems. After all, no one in his right mind would open fire in a crowded market, as did Friedman, wounding six Palestinians in his own personal bid to halt the peace process as an agreement on Israeli troop withdrawal from Hebron appeared to be drawing near.

Friedman now takes his place alongside Yigal Amir, the assassin of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin — and also a onetime seminarian — and Baruch Goldstein, the settler who killed dozens of Palestinians praying in Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque in 1994 with an army-issued semiautomatic weapon. These three shared the belief that any political process that aims to give away that which has been divinely given to the Jewish people should be stopped dead in its tracks.

This triumvirate, though, ought to force reconsideration of the widely held perception that Jewish terrorists commit random, individual acts, while Palestinian Arab terrorists are members of massive, well-structured and well-financed organisations. The mind-set that categorises Noam Friedman simply as a crazed individual obscures the fact that the ingredients for terrorism — ideology, organisation, funding and willingness to commit violence against civilians — are present in the ranks of Jewish and Arab extremists alike.

It also ignores the fact that the settlers, from whose ranks Friedman, Amir and Goldstein emerged, enjoy state support, both financial and moral. Indeed, the settlement policies of the Netanyahu government are provoking and sustaining a cycle of bloodshed between Israelis and Palestinians — with dangerous spillover effects throughout the region, including increased risks for Americans.

Relations between Israel and its two Arab peace partners, Egypt and Jordan, have cooled considerably since Benyamin Netanyahu's election in May last year. Syria and Israel are now trading accusations that the other is preparing for war — with increased troop movements and buildups by both sides in the Golan Heights as well as in south Lebanon. And it is not unlikely that Islamic fundamentalists active in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Middle East are inspired to hit American targets by continuing evidence of unmitigated U.S. support for a hardline, provocative Israeli government.

> ***"The perception of Israel's moral superiority is so entrenched, at least in the United States, that comparing the violent settlers with bus bombers of Hamas may seem unthinkable to some. But the history of settler violence shows that the fears of Arab Hebronites for their safety in the mosque and the marketplace are as legitimate as those of Jewish bus riders in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem."***

The perception of Israel's moral superiority is so entrenched, at least in the United States, that comparing the violent settlers with bus bombers of Hamas may seem unthinkable to some. But the history of settler violence shows that the fears of Arab Hebronites for their safety in the mosque and the marketplace are as legitimate as those of Jewish bus riders in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

In May 1990, a 21-year-old gunman named Ami Popper fired an assault rifle at a group of Palestinian workers from Gaza waiting for transport near the town of Risbon Le-Zion, southeast of Tel Aviv. The attack left seven people dead and 10 others wounded. Immediately after the incident, authorities described him as "deranged." At the time, his attorney argued that Popper was suffering from post-traumatic stress, but psychiatrists who examined Popper found him fit to stand trial, and he was sentenced to seven life terms.

Before that there was the notorious Jewish settler underground, 27 members of which were convicted in 1985 for crimes including conspiracy to blow up Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock Mosque, the placing of bombs on Arab buses and the maiming of two Palestinian mayors in the West Bank. When they received relatively light sentences — ranging from four months to 10 years — Yitzhak Shamir, then foreign minister, characterised the convicts as "excellent boys who erred" and recommended that they be pardoned.

U.S. Mideast envoy Dennis Ross did yeoman's service in helping Israeli and Palestinian negotiators close a deal on the pullout of Israeli forces from Hebron, which was complicated by linkage to the wider terms of the Oslo accords. But such an accomplishment is contradicted by an overall U.S. policy that does not seriously challenge Netanyahu on the settlement issue. Just as Yasser Arafat is obliged to rein in Palestinian extremists, Netanyahu should not be given carte blanche to allow a climate of Jewish extremism to flourish.

In a telling move recently, eight former high-ranking American diplomatic and policy officials including James Baker, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Cyrus Vance saw fit to send Netanyahu a letter chastising him — albeit in diplomatic language — for endangering the peace process with his policy on settlements.

Evidence of that danger is abundant. The call-and-response pattern of violence played out repeatedly by Israelis and Palestinians is often sparked by announcements of provocative policy. This was the case in December, when Palestinian gunmen attacked a West Bank settler family, killing two and wounding five a day after the Israeli government approved plans for a new Jewish housing development inside an Arab neighbourhood in East Jerusalem.

Cause and effect also were apparent in September, when Arab sensibilities about Jerusalem were similarly ignored with the opening of a tunnel near the Islamic holy sites on the Temple Mount; a four-day shooting war in the West Bank ensued.

Netanyahu's pro-settler stance has even had a ripple effect from within. Late last year 200,000 striking Israeli workers protested the prime minister's announcement that he intends to raise taxes and cut social spending — this against the background of a Labour Party estimate that government subsidies to the Jewish settlements — inhabited by just 140,000 people — cost Israeli taxpayers $300 million a year.

Ultimately, the peace process may depend in part on changing our way of seeing. We should not be comforted by allowing ourselves to regard Noam Friedman et al as disturbed individuals who have gone astray. They should be seen for what they are: symptoms of a larger and much more destructive phenomenon.

The Washington Post

LETTERS

Committee condemns torture

To the Editor:

WE HAVE followed with great concern the violations of the human rights of Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait.

Indeed, the torturing and beating up of prisoners is an abominable act and should be condemned.

We in the Arab Democratic Committee, ask the Kuwaiti government to stop torturing the prisoners and to release them immediately.

Also, we demand the Kuwaiti rulers to stop feeding the Kuwaitis' hatred and grudge against the Arab people.

We have also written several letters to human rights organisations concerning this problem and hope that action is taken.

Ibrahim Ebeid,
The Arab Democratic Committee,
U.S.

Shaping up JTV is needed

To the Editor:

CHANNEL 2 of Jordan Television praises itself with always featuring the latest programmes, feature films, sports events, and many more, but nothing can be furthest from the truth.

Most of the programmes broadcast on JTV are old, out of date and not enjoying the highest ratings, while cancelling shows that are very popular with the viewers, like "The bold and the beautiful" and "The Simpsons", has become a habit. Many sports events are old; the NBA games, for example, are seven months old.

Another annoying thing is broadcasting French programmes, to a very small minority of people, at daytime, when children are the majority of viewers.

Such considerations often make me, and others I am sure, tune in to neighbouring countries for updated, entertaining programmes.

I guess JTV has two alternatives in these circumstances: shape up or ship out.

Mohammad Musleh,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Feature

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Peru rebel leader insists on deal on prisoner release

LIMA (AFP) — The leader of a rebel commando unit holding 72 hostages here said Monday that the government had discussed a way to free some jailed *comrades, their top* demand in the extended hostage-taking.

Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori had said that the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) rebels had "implicitly" given up their demand to release 440 jailed fellow rebels.

But rebel leader Nestor Cerpa Cartolini, in a statement read from inside the Japanese embassy compound where the hostages are being held, said that the remarks were "amusing."

"It is completely false that we have renounced our request for the release of our comrades, a point that must be discussed in any eventual negotiations," he said.

But he said *that the* topic had been discussed with Ayacucho Archbishop Juan Luis Cipriani, a close friend of Mr. Fujimori's and a regular visitor to the embassy residence. "We have had informal conversations and in one of these with Mr. Cipriani we exchanged ideas on how our petitions could be met within a legal framework," he said.

This contradicts Mr. Fujimori's comment in a Washington Post interview published on Sunday that "we convinced them they can't push the liberation of MRTA prisoners. It took a long time, but we were very patient."

The rebel leader described Mr. Fujimori's remarks as "amusing" and demanded that Mr. Fujimori "make a public correction." He also said that he was awaiting Arch. Cipriani's next visit "to express our disagreement" with the comments.

The issue of prisoner releases is particularly difficult for Mr. Fujimori.

Since he was first elected in 1990, Mr. Fujimori's tough policies of arrests and extended prison terms have nearly ended violence that began with the emergence of the Maoist Shining Path in 1980 and has left 30,000 dead.

The special courts set up for accused rebels, however, were widely criticised internationally for excess zeal and the Fujimori government named an ombudsman in August 1996 to review their sentences.

Human rights groups have estimated that between 700 and 1,000 people are imprisoned without adequate proof.

The work of this ombudsman was stopped with the hostage-taking after 288 people were freed. Analysts have suggested that a possible compromise could be reached in which the ombudsman would be used to free selected MRTA prisoners.

Despite the regular informal talks, formal talks to end the hostage crisis that began on Dec. 17 have stalemated on the issue of whether or not the release of the MRTA rebels could be placed on the agenda.

With 19 Japanese among the hostages, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said Monday he had succeeded in persuading Mr. Fujimori to ease police pressure on the rebels after a shooting last week that threatened to erupt into bloodshed.

"I successfully let (Fujimori) say he would not use forceful measures as long as the hostages remain unhurt," Mr. Hashimoto told parliament after a meeting on Saturday in Toronto, Canada.

That has translated into a calmer situation at the white mansion in the exclusive San Isidro neighbourhood of Lima. Hostages include Peru's ministers of foreign affairs and agriculture, five lawmakers and the ambassadors of Japan and Bolivia.

Police at the residence had been playing loud military music and blasting sirens to drown out rebel music as well as sending a military parade complete with massive armoured troop carriers around the compound.

But as of Monday, rebel anthems played out over the exclusive neighbourhood without disruption by police. Mr. Hashimoto also said that efforts to seek dialogue with the leftist rebels should be stepped up and that Japan should take part in such talks. "I hope they will make a direct contact as soon as President Fujimori returns home from the United States," Mr. Hashimoto said.

El Al asked to stop using uranium to stabilise planes

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli carrier El Al uses hundreds of kilogrammes of uranium in the wings of its Boeing aircraft which could be dangerous in case of a crash, Israeli parliament sources here said Monday.

El Al continued using the uranium in the wings to stabilise the jets despite recommendations by the U.S. manufacturer Boeing that the uranium be replaced by less hazardous tungsten, said economic committee Chairman Eli Goldschmidt.

The revelations emerged during an investigation by the Israeli parliament committee into the crash of an El Al Boeing in Amsterdam in 1992 which left 70 people dead.

The uranium in the Boeing wings is only mildly radioactive but becomes dangerous when exposed to heat, when it gives off extremely toxic fumes which could cause cancer or respiratory diseases, experts told the panel.

Tungsten also gives off toxic fumes, but only at temperatures some 2,400 degrees Celsius (4,352 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than uranium requires, the experts said.

The El Al Boeing which crashed in a southeast suburb of Amsterdam burst into flames after smashing into buildings. Many residents, most of them African immigrants, have since complained of cancer, birth defects and other maladies.

Mr. Goldschmidt called on El Al to begin using tungsten in its planes' wings as soon as possible.

"After these discussions it appears that tungsten is better and that uranium is a radioactive material. It gives off toxins that cause cancers," he said.

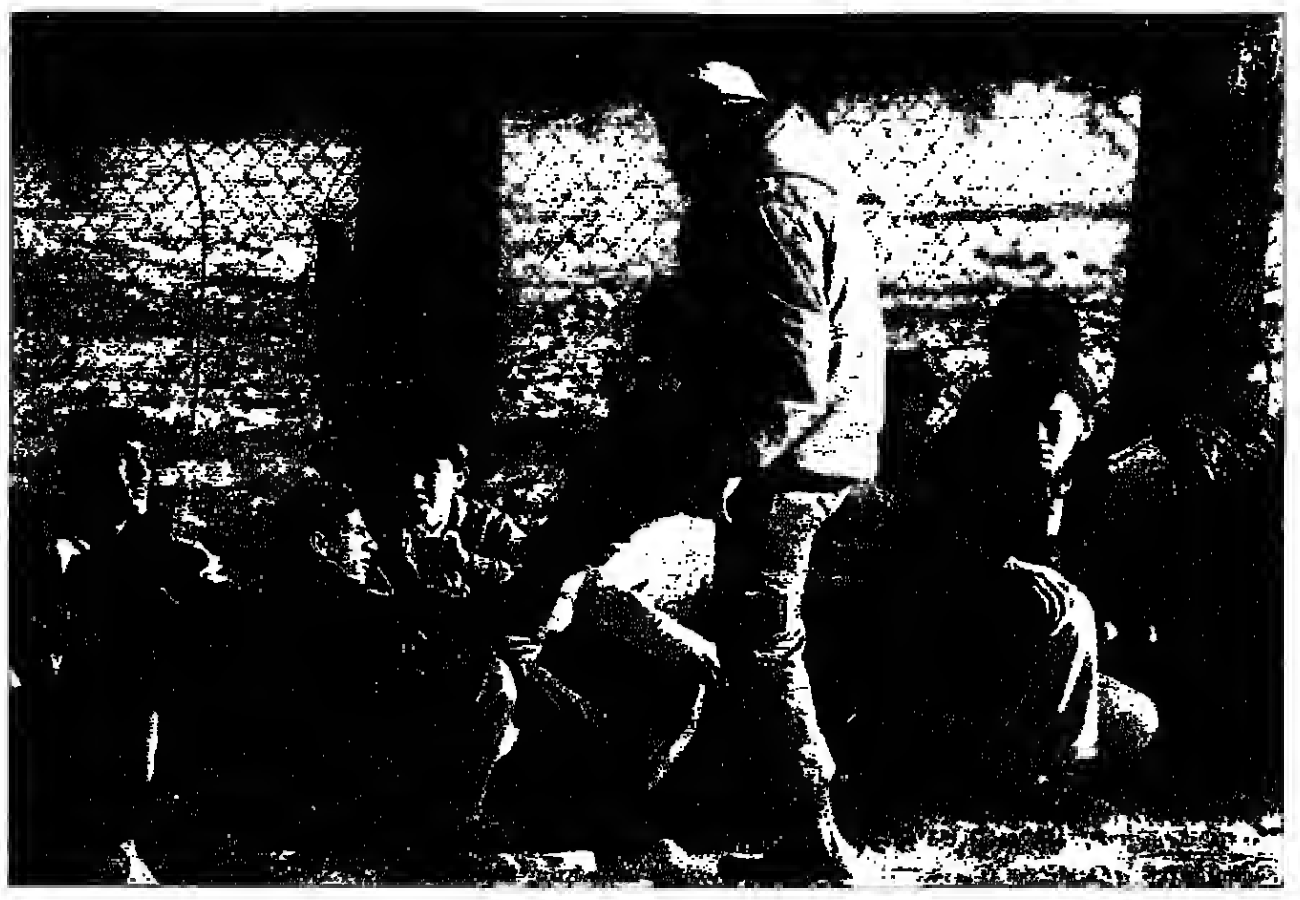
Uranium is used for stabilisation in airplane wings because of its extreme density, which allows less of it to be used than other metals. Experts at the panel said some 550 planes in the world still use uranium.

El Al spokesman Nachman Kleinman told AFP last week that the uranium in its plane's wings was "perfectly harmless."

The Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot reported last week that the Boeing which crashed in Amsterdam was carrying 189 spare parts for weapons as well as Sidewinder air-to-air missiles.

The presence of the weaponry could explain the large explosion when the plane crashed, the paper said.

Mr. Kleinman denied the presence of Sidewinders and said that military spare parts that were on the jet "posed no danger of exploding."



An Israeli captain in an army infantry unit kicks a Palestinian teenager as he and about 30 other Palestinians are made to sit on the ground on Monday while they are detained for suspicion of stone throwing on the outskirts of the Al Aroub Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank. At least two Palestinian teenagers were arrested by Israeli troops Monday morning as they made their way to school (Reuters photo)

Arafat: Issues should be settled before final-status talks

(Continued from page 1)

committee level next week.

The talks will focus on "specific implementation of steps by both Israel and the Palestinians on the agreement that we have reached following Hebron," Mr. Netanyahu said after a brief meeting with the Palestinian leader in Davos.

Under the Jan. 15 accord which brought Palestinian self-rule to most of the West Bank town of Hebron, negotiations on safe passages, the airport and port were to have restarted "immediately."

Talks on a final peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians are due to start by mid-March.

Mr. Arafat called on the European Union to play a political role in the Middle East peace process in addition to its economic contribution.

"I insist and I continue to insist for a European role in the peace process," Mr. Arafat told a press conference in the Hague after talks with Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok and Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo. "I can't imagine the Israelis and the Palestinians only looking at the economic role of Europe and neglecting the political role. It would be unfair and impolite," Mr. Arafat said.

The Palestinian leader was on a one-day visit to the Netherlands, which holds the EU's rotating presidency for the first half of 1997.

Mr. Van Mierlo, noting that the EU was "by far the biggest (aid) donor to the Palestinians," said that the EU "simply won't accept being shunted aside."

He added, however, that the EU was not seeking "a place at the negotiating table" but wanted to "make itself useful" and "put its expertise at everyone's disposal."

In Davos, Mr. Arafat also called the closure imposed on its territory by Israel a "collective punishment," and warned that his patience over restrictions was wearing thin.

The closure enforced by the Israelis against Palestinian territory "is a collective punishment against our people. They are using it as an instrument for pressure," Mr. Arafat told journalists after a day-long round of meetings at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Mr. Arafat fumed that the Gaza Airport, finished seven months ago, was still not open for business while the Gaza harbour, a joint venture project funded by European capital, had not secured operating approval from the Israelis.

"Patience has its limits," he said.

"We hope that this meeting (on Thursday) will try to solve all the problems we are facing. The problems is not only against Palestinians. It is against the peace process. And we have to be very careful," he said.

"We have to protect the peace process, in the whole area of the Middle East. And for this I am worried," he stressed, referring to a delaying of the implementation of the post Hebron agreements.

Crown Prince calls focus on sports

(Continued from page 1)

Prince Ra'd, president of the Jordan Handicapped Sports Federation, also stressed the need for concentrating on the new generations through schools sports.

"Schools and athletic clubs should play a role in building a sports generation that could compete in all levels of sports fields," Prince Ra'd said.

At the end of the iftar, Prince Hassan exchanged views with the gathering and listened to their demands and problems and ways to enhance the Jordanian participation in the Arab and international sports.

Syria wants U.S. pressure

(Continued from page 1)

to honour and implement "faithfully" its peace accords with Arabs.

A Syrian official said Damascus was also satisfied with the outcome of the tour of Arab states by Mr. Khaddam and Mr. Sharaa which was aimed at rallying support for Syria's demands for peace with Israel.

"Syria is satisfied with President Mubarak's remarks saying the government of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu should honour its deals with Arabs and that peace talks with Syria should resume on the basis of land-for-peace (formula)," a senior Syrian official told Reuters.

Mr. Mubarak made his remarks at a news conference on Sunday just before holding his first formal talks in six months with Mr. Netanyahu in the Swiss resort of Davos where they were attending the World Economic Forum.

Mr. Mubarak called on Israel to implement "faithfully" recent Middle East peace accords with Arabs, implicitly warning that delay could undermine the Middle East peace process.

"Policies and practices which are illegal and inconsistent with the spirit of peace, such as settlement activities, should be avoided and stopped altogether," said Mr. Mubarak.

Mr. Mubarak also asked Mr. Netanyahu to resume peace negotiations with Syria and Lebanon "without delay" and on the basis of the land-for-peace principle.

Mr. Netanyahu, elected last May, rejects Syria's demand that Israel return the Golan Heights.

He, however, told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz last week he would raise "various ideas" for breaking the deadlock with Syria when he meets U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House next month.

The Syrian official reiterated that Israel had agreed, during sporadic talks which began in 1991 and broke off in March 1996, to withdraw fully from the Golan Heights.

"Israel agreed during the talks with Syria to withdraw to the (pre-war) June 4, 1967 lines. The talks should resume from this point," the official told Reuters.

Hebron street partially reopened

(Continued from page 12)

he was pleased.

"It is a positive step and we are waiting for a complete opening," he said.

Gas station owner Ahmad Jabar was optimistic as he cleaned up his business, noting he had lost a million shekels in the three years the street was closed to Palestinians. "We hope that we can open a new page without violence," Mr. Jabar said.

Israel pulled the bulk of its troops out of Hebron on Dec. 17, nine months later than originally scheduled.

As Israel kept one promise, the Palestinians accused it of violating other elements of the Hebron agreement which gives the Palestinians control over civilian authorities in the city.

Kabariti reaffirms Jordanian stand

(Continued from page 1)

cards and drive to evict Palestinians from Jerusalem, and reviewed with him the latest developments in the peace process.

Mr. Husseini said the situation in Jerusalem was intolerable, adding that Israel was trying to change the character of the Holy City to gain a better bargaining position in the final status negotiations with the Palestinians.

He said that he was holding contacts with Arab and Islamic countries to discuss the situation in Jerusalem and appealed to Arabs and Muslims to provide political and legal as well as material aid to the Palestinian people so that they can foil Israel's plots.

Mr. Husseini was earlier quoted by the Abu Dhabi-based Al Ittihad daily as calling for an Arab summit meeting to discuss ways for confronting Israel's measures to Judaise Jerusalem.

He said that Israel was endangering peace by pursuing its illegal measures in and around the city and building Jewish settlements on Arab lands.

Mr. Husseini also called for an emergency meeting by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to address the situation.

Kahalani urges Lebanon pullout

(Continued from page 1)

impose such an agreement on Lebanon," he added.

The minister said that if the idea of unilateral withdrawal was not accepted by the Israeli government, it should still change its policy towards Lebanon. Israel should retaliate harshly for every Hizbollah attack in which Israeli soldiers are hurt or killed.

"We have to decide that for every soldier who gets hurt in Lebanon, we will fire a missile or artillery shell at a power station in Lebanon," Mr. Kahalani said. "We have to hit them hard."

In a related development, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said Israel has received information that in the past year, 30 transport planes carrying weapons and ammunition from Iran for Hizbollah have landed in Damascus.

Mr. Levy, in remarks to a Jewish group in Paris on Sunday carried by the Israeli press on Monday, also quoted "normally trustworthy sources" as accusing China and North Korea of providing "terrible chemical weapons" to Syria. "We know of 30 cargo planes which have brought weapons and munitions from Iran to Hizbollah via Syria since the end of the Operation Grapes of Wrath in April," Mr. Levy said.

Before a 17-day Israeli offensive against Hizbollah bases in Lebanon, the guerrillas were receiving only about three planeloads of arms per year from Iran, according to Israeli military sources.

Israeli officials have in the past reported a stepped up pace of Iranian arms deliveries to Hizbollah.

But Mr. Levy's statements implied that Israel had obtained more detailed information on the shipments.

Turning to Syria, Mr. Levy complained about President Hafez Al-Assad's "extremist policies and attempts to dictate conditions to us" for a resumption of peace negotiations.

Last week Mr. Levy made a series of upbeat statements regarding the possibility of Israel and Syria returning to the negotiating table after the break of a year.

But following the Hizbollah bombing Friday that killed three Israeli soldiers in South Lebanon, Israeli officials have turned to warning Damascus against trying to pressure it via attacks by Lebanese proxies.

Syria is demanding that as a precondition to new negotiations Israel agree in principle to return the occupied Golan Heights in exchange for peace. Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu has refused.

Randa Habib's corner

Waiting for ... the snow

WHY ARE we complaining? The weatherman announced time and again that it was going to snow, and people were even warned to take necessary precautions and brace for snowstorms. Alas, it did not snow. So, it is a big deal? Don't you ever make mistakes?

Even if this is becoming a recurrent thing, what is the problem? We should take things easy, the same with everything else that goes around here. Let us stop nagging. For when someone tells you something that later appears to be wrong, there is no reason to make a big fuss about it.

Anyhow, I am personally a big fan of weathermen. First, I love the way they present their programmes. Somebody must have told them once they should be less tense. And they really made a big effort in that field, sporting a broad smile on their faces. If you have not noticed, look carefully how they move their hands, their heads and sometimes their eyes. Do you think it is easy to face the camera?

Isn't the big effort they put in obvious? They are talking to us as if we were children listening to bed-time stories. All that is missing is the fairy. But with people like them, who needs her anyway?

Also, they could turn sometimes into a very nice mime entertainment. Lower the sound of your television set and watch them. It is amusing.

As for the content of their presentation, I think it is also great. Whose fault is it if the winds or the clouds decide one day to make a U-turn and drop plans to precipitate all over our beloved country? Certainly it is not that of the weatherman.

And if people panic, rush to queue in front of bakeries and supermarkets to pile up groceries for a "black" snowy day that might keep them confined to their homes, is it the weatherman's mistake? Why do people have to take everything they hear for granted? Let it be a lesson for the future.

But, what if it snows tonight? Let us wait and see; after all, expectations do materialise one day, and we should not forget that "to err is human."

Tourabi sees bigger conflict if land not retaken from rebels

KHARTOUM (AP) — Undaunted by a rebellion at home and mounting isolation abroad, Sudan's Islamic leader threatened Sunday to ignite a wider war in the Horn of Africa if Sudanese forces do not recapture territory seized by rebels last month.

Hassan Tourabi, Sudan's parliament speaker and architect of its Islamic government, predicted the military would easily dislodge insurgents who quickly pushed back dispirited government troops in an offensive in eastern Sudan along the Ethiopian border.

But he said his government might allow Ethiopian rebels to stage attacks from Sudan if it did not retake its land.

"If it costs (Sudan) very much to regain its territory, it would probably reciprocate," Mr. Tourabi said in an interview with the Associated Press.

"It would lead to conflict. If anyone enjoys the scenes of the Hutus and Tutsis," he said, without finishing the sentence. "It will be quite a misery actually."

Sudan has accused neighbouring Eritrea and Ethiopia of deploying their soldiers across the border to help rebels seize a strip of land along the Blue Nile. Both have denied sending forces, but have granted the rebels sanctuary in their territory and have made clear their dislike of Sudan's government.

In the past, they have accused Sudan of supporting their own opponents, a charge made more plausible by Mr. Tourabi's threat. Egypt has made similar accusations and Washington regards the government in Khartoum as a key sponsor of "terrorism."

Mr. Tourabi's remarks come amid a troubled time for his government, which has overseen a marked deterioration in the economy since it seized power in a 1989 coup. Rumours of another coup are heard repeatedly in the capital, and the army is believed to be unhappy with the way the war is being prosecuted, diplomats say.

The offensive by southern rebels and northern opposition parties may force the government to compromise, either by bringing opponents into the ruling circle or by easing tension with its neighbours and the United States, diplomats and residents say.

Mr. Tourabi, however, said he doubted there would be a reconciliation with Washington "for a while." Its hostility towards Sudan will backfire, he predicted, angering Muslims everywhere.

"America incarnates the devil for Muslims," he said. "When I say Muslims, I mean all the Muslims in the world, whether in Russia, in China, in Indonesia, in Morocco or inside America itself. And Islam is spreading in America."

Mr. Tourabi has won the respect of some Islamic activists who admire his opposition to the West as well as his success in transforming a small Islamic group founded at Khartoum University in the 1960s into one of the more successful political movements in the Muslim World.

His National Islamic Front is the only revolutionary Islamic group to have taken power in an Arab country.

But his support for Iraq during the Gulf war and for Islamic movements abroad, like Hamas in the Palestinian territories and Egypt's Islamic group, has isolated his regime.

A lawyer with degrees from universities in London and Paris, Mr. Tourabi is the real power behind the government, *although* General Omar Al Bashir, who led the coup, holds the title of president.

In the interview, Mr. Tourabi offered a mix of resentment and admiration of the United States, at one point ridiculing President Bill Clinton's home state — "Arkansas is nothing" — while later saying that next to Sudan, he would choose to live in America.

"The Americans know very little about the world," Mr. Tourabi said. But he then added: "There is no reason why Americans don't talk to Sudan. They could have a lot of interests here."

He also insisted he was willing to hold negotiations with John Garang, the leader of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which led last month's offensive.

Netanyahu has new ideas to boost Palestine economy

DAVOS, Switzerlaned (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu said he wanted to boost the flow of Palestinian trade through Israel as one way of pumping up the area's prosperity, which in turn would aid the peace process.

"What I want to do is increase by an order of magnitude our ability to facilitate the flow of goods (through Israel) and that is by having very sophisticated security checks," he told journalists at a press briefing after a flurry of meetings with Mideast and other leaders at an economic forum in Davos.

High technology would allow, for instance, trucks to pass Israeli checkpoints in minutes, instead of hours, he said, speeding up the flow of goods.

But "this requires money. We do not have the money as we cut the budget. But Europe has money. The World Bank has money," the Israeli prime minister said.

The results would be beneficial to both sides, he said.

"I think if (Palestine's) economy is better, our security is better. And if we have security, we can move the peace forward," he stressed.

He said negotiations on Gaza port and its airport would begin the week after next, "with the view to facilitating completion of these projects, subejct to Israeli security control."

Mr. Netanyahu said he had discussed high technology ventures with the Palestinian and Egyptian leaders.

"I would like to change the so-called division of labour where Israel does the high tech and our neighbours do low tech," he said, adding that "I think we can surprise a lot of people in the not too distant future."

He said a lack of job opportunites, and not "closure", was the main problem facing the Palestinian economy.

Israel had actually increased the number of permits for Palestinian workers to 55,000 from 22,000 but only 46,000 were being used, he said.

The "slack" of jobs was taken up by an estimated 400,000 foreign workers from a dozen countries, he said, adding that Israel's policy was to cut in half that number and give the jobs to the Palestinians.

"The main trouble right now is one of employment opportunities and that will take time to adjust," Mr. Netanyahu said.

Iraq announces grain production increase amid warning from Saddam

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq announced Monday its first rise in grain output since U.N. sanctions were imposed six years ago, but President Saddam Hussein called for even higher production and warned against any decrease.

President Saddam, who has been promoting farm output to ease food shortages, chaired Sunday's cabinet meeting which welcomed last year's "excellent results" when grain output increased 15 per cent over 1995, the official press said.

The press said production of rice grew by 12 per cent, corn by 460 per cent and cotton by 600 per cent, but provided no total figures.

President Saddam also called for a "ten-fold increase in efforts" to raise production and added that in no case "should production be allowed to drop again," according to remarks reported by the official press.

"We have not yet mobilised all our capacity," President Saddam said. "Our main concern is to maintain this level of production as the minimum threshold and try to increase it."

Iraq, which imported more than two-thirds of its food before the embargo, has in the last few years promoted the expansion of arable land to raise food output.

It was the first time Iraq announced an increase in grain production since the United Nations imposed oil and trade sanctions on Baghdad after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said Iraq produced 2.5 million tonnes in 1995, a figure which fell by 10 per cent over the previous year and which met only 30 per cent of the country's food needs.

Iraq needs three million tonnes of wheat per year to guarantee the distribution of flour to its population of almost 20 million people who are suffering from a shortage of basic foods, according to official figures.

The government has banned sales of grain on the free market since sanctions were imposed and asks farmers to send their harvest to the state which distributes the product at set prices.

Iraq plans to increase rations of basic foods after having resumed limited oil exports in December under a humanitarian deal with the United Nations to raise funds for food and medicine.

The extra food and medicine shipments — which have always been exempt from sanctions — are expected to begin arriving here next month under the deal.

Agriculture has suffered from the sanctions which deprive farmers of fertilizers, insecticides and farming equipment needed to boost their crop yields.

U.S. growth embarrasses Europe to prod economies

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — European corporate and government leaders, embarrassed by the latest confirmation of solid U.S. growth, are saying they have to redouble efforts to revive their weak economies.

As Clinton administration officials crowed over U.S. performance at the annual World Economic Forum, many Europeans with them in this Alpine resort said at the weekend they were paying more attention to the U.S. model of low taxes, little social welfare and unfettered competition.

"This doesn't mean that we have to replicate in Europe exactly what they have done in the United States. But we have to look around and see how other countries are more successful in fighting unemployment," Belgian Finance Minister Philippe Maystadt told Reuters.

"I think this implies that we go further in reforms in the goods and services markets and in the labour markets," Mr. Maystadt said.

Labour rules limiting such things as weekend and night work or part-time contracts are a particular focus of attention by European governments including the German and French, but moves to loosen them have been slowed by union and public protests.

Britain is something of an exception, with forecasts its growth will lead the continental economies this year due in part to a greater degree of deregulation.

Mr. Maystadt said the United States was in "an ideal situation" after fourth-quarter 1996 data on Friday confirmed nearly six years of gross domestic product (GDP) growth and the lowest inflation in 30 years.

Louis Schweitzer, chairman and chief executive of French carmaker Renault, said the United States was drawing increasing interest from continental European policy makers.

"The U.S. is showing that you can have sustained, non-inflationary growth and this is good," Mr. Schweitzer said.

While European inflation is under control, European Commission figures show the European Union (EU) has managed to create only 10 million new jobs since the 1960s, less than one fifth of what the United States has achieved.

EU unemployment now stands at 11 per cent compared with about 5.5 per cent in the United States and the EU level of GDP per capita is nearly one third below that of the United States.

"It is an embarassment," said Georges Ugeux, New York Stock Exchange executive vice president in charge of international business and a Belgian national who formerly worked as a fund manager for the European Union.

"It is more than an embarrassment in the sense that it is painful, because at the end of the day the issue is that we should have more people having jobs, we should have higher growth," he said.

Even Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission and a staunch defender of its performance, acknowledged there was a widespread perception the EU was uncompetitive and economically weak.

"Nowadays, Europe is too often in the dock as the accused," he said, then argued the facts showed Europe was strong and moving firmly towards a common currency that would help boost growth by making the bloc more competitive.

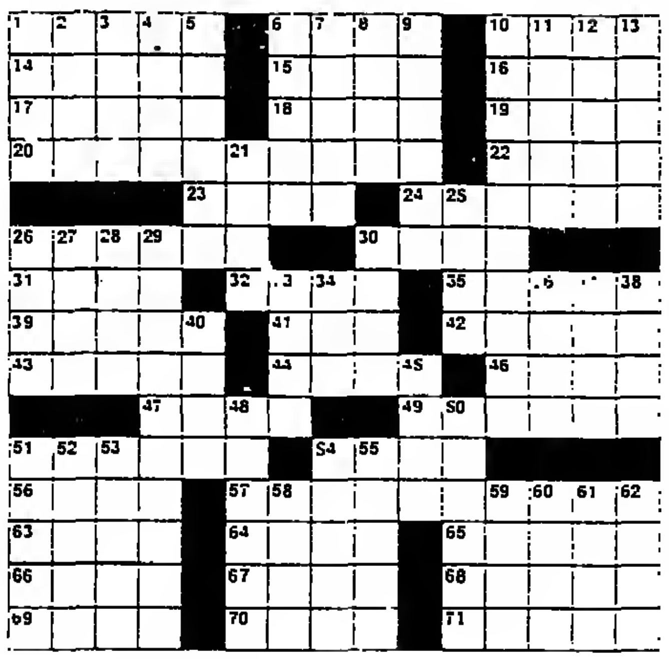
"Europe continues to be a social, economic and political model for many parts of the world," Mr. Santer told a Davos panel discussion on Europe's future.

Ironically, one of the strongest warnings against the U.S. economic formula came at Davos from an American, John Sweeny of the labour federation AFL/CIO.

Mr. Sweeney said U.S. growth was built on the back of underemployment and weak social benefits that go against the grain of continental Europe's well-organised workers.

"Far from being a cure-all, the attempt of any advanced European social democracy to imbibe the neo-liberal version of the U.S. model would create massive social upheaval, with far greater economic costs than benefits," Mr. Sweeney said.

THE Daily Crossword



by Dorothy B. Martin

ACROSS
1 Egg-shaped
6 It's —!
10 Ms. Fitzgerald
14 MA seaport
15 Tibetan monk
16 Kind of tide
17 Coeur d' — ID
18 Press
19 Cost per unit
20 Register
22 So as to cover
23 Acquire
24 Mystery Queen
26 Sleepies
30 Cute
31 Flying prefix
32 Pueblo Indian
35 Big hit
39 Citrus fruit
41 Footlike part
42 Certain home
43 San Antonio shrine
44 — Major
46 Appellation
47 Marries
49 Sea bird
51 Femme —
54 Hideaway
56 Czech river
57 Register
63 Irish author O'Flaherty
64 Construction unit
65 Turkish title
66 Forfeit
67 Sole
68 Uses a stopwatch
69 Belgian river
70 Vast expanses
71 Idolize

DOWN
1 Glacial ridges
2 Farewell
3 Author Waugh
4 "A — 'clock scholar"
5 Appear
6 Excuse
7 Man of wealth and influence
8 Melville tale
9 New England native
10 Register
11 Depart
12 Subsequently
13 Silly trick
21 Sprint
25 Endure
26 Room in a casa
27 Baker's shovellike instrument
28 "— la Douce"
29 Register
30 Ophidian sound
33 Composition
34 Apiece
36 On — with (equal to)
37 Strewn with figures, in heraldry
38 Cad
40 Christmas carol
45 "Baked in —"
48 Mischievous ones
50 Painting mistakes
51 Foolishness
52 Farewell
53 Tantalize
54 Virile
55 Land measures
58 Woodwind instrument
59 In the center of
60 Jules Verne character
61 Grandpa on "The Waltons"
62 [illegible]

LAMP TALC CABLE
AGER OMOO ALLEY
DETECTION REAVE
SEACOASTS MUSER
ELLS TEETERS
PANDAS MANN
ALOES NONO SOLE
LION DENTS EVEN
PENT EWES EMEND
PACT SLANTS
LAMELLA OPEN
AROMA SELECTIVE
MELON TREATISES
ENATE LIAR CENT
OARES EENS SETH

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REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Prices as at 3/02/97 20:39

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.6424	0.6202	1.4212	121.71	1.3432	1621.24	1.6449	5.5560
DE Mark	0.6089	-	0.3772	0.8652	74.07	0.6174	986.52	1.1232	3.3825
GB Sterling	1.6123	2.6505	-	2.2901	196.32	2.1656	2813.93	2.9745	8.9578
CH Franc	0.7036	115.48	0.4359	-	85.62	0.9444	1139.85	129.84	3.9066
JP Yen	0.0082	1.3486	0.5089	1.1667	-	1.1026	13.31	151.46	4.5612
CA Dollar	0.7445	1.2132	0.4639	1.0566	1.10	-	1194.11	1.3626	4.1064
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0112	0.3816	0.0875	1334.58	0.6269	-	11.36	3.4207
NL Guilder	0.5420	88.98	0.3358	77.03	65.93	0.7276	878.29	-	3.0099
FR Franc	0.1600	0.2955	0.1115	25.5658	21.88	0.2418	33.19	33.1900	-

Energy

Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	23.55	23.60
W. Texas	24.20	24.10
Bony	23.55	23.60
Dubai	20.25	20.94
UL Gas	214.00	214.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4384	0.16544	0.37935	32.4918
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.44773	0.16898	0.38746	33.1862
KW Dinar	3.3072	5.43478	2.05128	4.70367	402.901
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.3592	1.64528	3.77216	323.102
CY Pound	2.0176	3.3137	1.2506	2.8674	245.562

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	346.2	346.7
Silver (oz's)	4.9	4.92
Platinum (oz's)	350.75	351.75
AL (3 Months)	#N/A DR	N/A ORF
CU (3 Months)	#N/A DR	N/A DRF
Zinc (3 Months)	#N/A DR	N/A DRF
Lead (3 Months)	#N/A DR	N/A DRF
NI (3 Months)	#N/A DR	N/A ORF

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period / Ccy	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
USD	5.37	5.56	5.48	5.80	5.70
GBP	6.18	6.24	6.37	6.59	6.66
JPY	0.40	0.32	0.32	0.59	0.50
DEM	3.00	2.87	2.87	3.02	3.07
FRF	3.22	3.26	3.29	3.27	3.32
CHF	1.53	1.46	1.63	1.68	1.73
ITL	7.45	7.35	6.86	8.87	6.73

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	142.5	Spot
Cocoa ($/ton)	1329	Spot
Sugar ($/ton)	304	Spot
Wheat ($/ton)	130	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	22.26	Spot
Tea (stg/kg)	89.1	Spot
Barley ($/bsh)	2.16	Spot
Rice ($/ton)	470	Spot

* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1333	1.139
DE Mark	0.4306	0.4328
CH Franc	0.4885	0.499
FR Franc	0.1276	0.1282
JP Yen	0.5822	0.5851
NL Guilder	0.3834	0.3853
IT Lira	0.4375	0.4397

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Peanuts

HERE'S A LIST OF THE ATHLETES' NAMES.. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FORGE THEIR SIGNATURES.. YOU CAN START WITH THE BASKETBALLS..
SCHULZ
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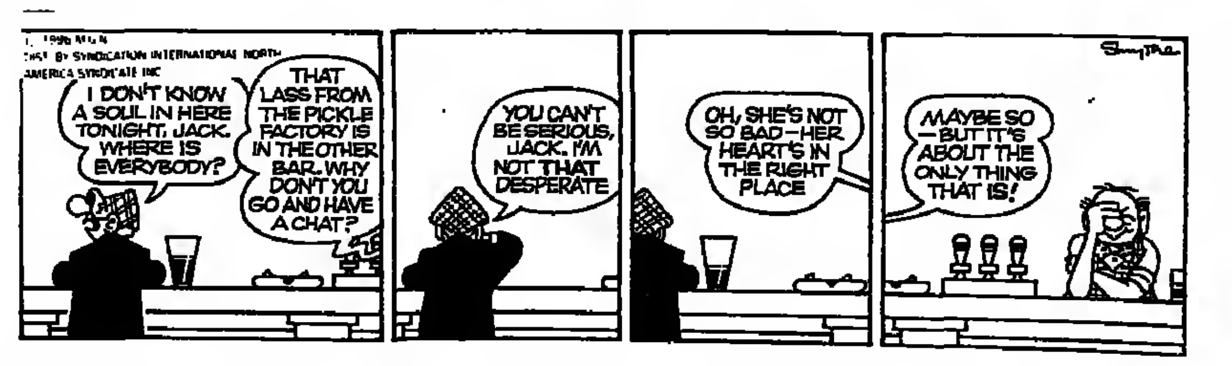
Andy Capp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I DON'T KNOW A SOUL IN HERE TONIGHT, JACK. WHERE IS EVERYBODY?
THAT LASS FROM THE PICKLE FACTORY IS IN THE OTHER BAR. WHY DON'T YOU GO AND HAVE A CHAT?
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, JACK. I'M NOT THAT DESPERATE
OH, SHE'S NOT SO BAD — HER HEART'S IN THE RIGHT PLACE
MAYBE SO — BUT IT'S ABOUT THE ONLY THING THAT IS!
Smythe

Mutt'n'Jeff

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, JULIUS?
I HAVE NO HOME SO I'M MAKING ONE IN THIS TREE!
GOSH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT! THE MUTTS HAVE BEEN VERY NICE TO ME.
THEY CALL ME THEIR STAR BOARDER! --- I'LL ASK 'EM IF YOU CAN STAY WITH US!
JEFF
JULIUS

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a perfect opportunity to settle some difficult business matters and make your career activities more successful. Be sure you do your share of any cooperative activities, thereby you won't have the appearance of slacking off.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make sure you keep a promise you've made to your mate today, or risk a possible misunderstanding and disagreement by reneging. You can seek out the advice of some bigwig and make your business venture better.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Some unfinished tasks at home can be finished quickly and easily if you use some enthusiasm. Don't invite any disagreeable guest into your home or there could be confrontation which is not desirable.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Today is ideal for running errands, paying bills and visiting close friends. Handle some neglected correspondence later this evening and thereby you can gain the respect of a knowledgeable person in authority.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Review and revise your accounts this morning and make that the figures are correct. Check your possessions for needed repairs and if you find any, make them immediately so that you can look your best.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A friend could make a critical remark which bothers you today, however, don't lose your temper, it was constructive and will help you in the days ahead. You can meet with fellow associates and discuss business activities.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You should stop living in a dream world today and turn your ideas into reality. Do something thoughtful later this evening just for the heck of it and you will gain much affect from him her for sometime.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you lack a sense of direction today, confer with some successful acquaintance and get their advice for making your career activities quite prosperous. This will be a happy evening if you are compassionate towards your mate.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Know what is expected of you from your superiors today, they may be scrutinising your performance. Be conscientious towards your loved ones and they will demonstrate much appreciation for your generosity.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can have great success today in gathering needed information, so find it and use it to make your career activities very prosperous. A newcomers attitude may disturb you if you allow it, so be stern.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your mate may have some doubts today about your activities this morning, however, he or she will be supportive later this evening. Use great care while driving on the highway, so that you avoid any difficulty.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A fellow associate may act strangely this morning, however, once your point is understood, he or she will be very helpful. Dress nicely for a social function later this evening and you could be the hit of the party.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx.

Israel denies cancelling gas joint venture with Jordan

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon denied Sunday Jordanian charges the Jewish state cancelled a joint venture that would have supplied the two countries with gas from the Gulf.

"Regarding cancellation of the Aqaba project which the Jordanian energy minister related to...Sharon emphasises Israel did not cancel any project and it is ready to discuss with any element the supplying of gas to Israel, including with...Qatar and Enron which proposed supplying liquefied gas," Sharon's office said in a statement.

"A letter clarifying this position was sent...to the Qatari foreign minister," it added.

U.S. energy giant Enron Corp spearheaded the project to set up a $300 million regasification plant at Jordan's Red Sea port of Aqaba to bring liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar to Israel and Jordan in the first quarter of 2001.

Sharon's office added: "In parallel, the infrastructure ministry continues to check various possibilities to bring natural gas and electricity on a cost benefit basis also from other sources."

Jordanian Energy Minister Hashem Dabbas told Reuters earlier on Sunday: "The project is non-existent...The new Israeli government is apparently not interested in the project any longer."

The deal was agreed at a Middle East economic summit two years ago following the Jordan-Israel peace treaty in 1994 that ended a 46-year state of war.

Israel's previous Labour government, ousted in elections last May, strongly lobbied for the project, despite opposition of some Israeli industrial groups, to help draw Jordan closer economically and consolidate peace.

Last October, Israel's infrastructure ministry said Israel had informed Enron Corp that it no longer had an exclusive agreement to negotiate with Qatar for natural gas supplies for Israel.

Enron and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding in October 1995 granting the Houston-based company 180 days to finalise an agreement with Qatar for the supply of at least two million tonnes a year of natural gas.

Dr. Dabbas said that Jordan's own letter of intent with Enron signed last March also lapsed after a 180-day period expired.

Investors in Jordan say Israel believes getting LNG from Qatar by vessels is more expensive than other sources including direct pumping of gas from Egypt.

They said the deal's collapse was a setback to efforts to create large private sector joint ventures that would create a common interest in preserving peace.

Mr. Sharon Sunday emphasised the importance of such ventures.

"Israel sees great importance in furthering economic projects jointly between Israel and Jordan, including other projects in the area of production and use of electricity on a basis beneficial to both sides," his office said.

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Housing Bank records JD10.5m pretax profit

** SINCE IT was established in 1973 and until the end of last year the Housing Bank has extended JD2,266 million in loans and credit facilities for housing projects, real estate and development purposes. Of this amount, JD1,095 million financed building 157,000 housing units for a total area of 22 million square metres which represent 21.4 per cent of the overall licensed areas in Jordan.

[illegible] ousi[illegible] [illegible]aid in a report that growth of its [illegible]ding lo[illegible] [illegible]it facilities was around 6.9 per [illegible]mpared to [illegible] cent at all other banks. In [illegible] report poi[illegible] the Housing Bank extended [illegible]ately JD22[illegible] [illegible] in housing loans and cred[illegible]s.

Oth[illegible] financial data highlighted in the report were the recording of JD10.5 million pretax profit last year and an increase of JD33 million in total assets to reach JD1,136 million. The bank's reserves rose to JD56.3 million, an amount that twice exceeded the capital which was raised to JD25 million in 1995.

Furthermore, the shareholders' equity has increased to JD81.3 million. This figure has kept the Housing Bank in the second place within the banking system and gave it a capital adequacy ratio of about 16.2 per cent which is a percentage higher than the new level of 12 per cent required by the Central Bank.

The bank was able to boost clients' deposits by JD56 million and, as such, total deposits reached JD918 million. The reports boasted that the growth in deposits was more than the growth at all other banks combined. It showed that the bank registered a 5.5 per cent growth in deposits whereas all other banks combined registered a 3.5 per cent growth in deposits (AL RA'I).

Losses reach JD34 million at Amman Bank for Investment

** ACCUMULATED LOSSES as of June 30, 1996 have reached JD34 million at the Amman Bank for Investment. During the first half of 1996 alone, the bank posted a loss of about JD 1.3 million. According to the bank's financial report, deposits dropped by 32.5 per cent to reach JD76.78 million of which JD66 million were deposits of customers. As a result of the decline in deposits, the bank's balance sheet total dropped by 23.3 per cent to reach JD85.2 million at the end of June 1996 (Al Aswaq).

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"I'm no different from any other woman. Now and again I just need a great big hug—from Tom Cruise."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NACYF

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TAULD

REBLUT

SPATOL

See? Clean as a whistle
WHAT THE JANITOR'S JOB GAVE THE EX-CON.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: A "○○○○○○" ○○○○○

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: YOKEL CRESS BICKER HECTIC
Answer: What the customer got from the cactus plant—"STICKER SHOCK"

Soros helps form Israeli venture capital fund

TEL AVIV (R) — Quantum Industrial Holdings Ltd, a fund managed by the Soros Group, is forming a venture capital fund with Comverse Technology Inc. (CTI) to invest in Israeli high tech companies, a Comverse executive has said.

Yaacov Koren said the two sides would each hold half the $30 million fund to be called Comsor Investment Fund B.V., based in the Netherlands.

He said the fund would invest in high technology companies without focusing on specific segments. "We have not limited ourselves to specific areas of high technology," he said.

He said Comsor would consider increasing the size of the fund and perhaps take on additional investors but that there are no immediate plans to do so.

"The current stockholders have the resources to expand the funds for additional investments....the amount is reasonable for now," Mr. Koren said.

Quantum Industrial Holdings is a New York-based private equity investment management firm founded by George Soros. Its parent, Quantum Group, has assets of approximately $15 billion.

Comverse, which is based in Woodbury, New York but conducts much of its activities in Israel, develops and manufactures computer and telecommunications systems. Its CTI capital unit, which Mr. Koren heads, invests in Israeli high tech start-up companies and will act as Comsor's Israeli agent.

In the past year Soros companies have taken stakes in Israel's Indigo N.V., a manufacturer of computerised print equipment, and El Rov Ltd, a property developer. Soros also participated in an abortive bid for Bank Hapoalim.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 03/02/1997

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
261.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	14.0	1.37	1	40	10240	256.00	256.00	-
3.660	2.900	BANK OF JORDAN	11.4	0.00	2	240	758	3.17	3.17	
1.210	.880	MID.EAST INV.BK.	75.5	0.00	8	204250	228865	1.14	1.15	.01+
2.680	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	5.4	5.87	1	250	593	2.27	2.37	
5.250	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.8	2.89	7	1350	6437	4.75	4.77	.02+
2.950	2.440	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	19.7	0.00	4	315	856	2.70	2.72	.02+
1.090	.880	JOR.GULF BANK	5.7	7.29	2	12450	11952	.96	.96	-
4.180	2.480	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	18.2	0.00	8	2100	7896	3.74	3.78	.04+
♦ 3.120	1.620	BEIT.AL-MAL (BEITNA)	1.0	9.26	1	500	810	1.67	1.62	.05-
1.450	1.000	PHILADEL.INV.BK.	9	0.00	10	6950	8371	1.20	1.22	.02+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 195.27	%CHG: +0.10		44	228445	276776			
1.740	1.390	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	11.7	4.69	2	13600	21760	1.65	1.60	.05-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 120.00	%CHG: -0.19		2	13600	21760			
1.830	1.450	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	11.4	7.32	13	3065	5024	1.62	1.64	.02+
1.560	1.280	IRBID ELECTRICITY	9.5	6.90	3	600	871	1.45	1.45	
5.450	4.200	ARAB INTL.HOTELS	18.4	2.76	1	200	930	4.65	4.65	.
1.600	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	g	0.00	12	2840	4680	1.21	1.22	.01+
1.050	.820	REAL ESTATE INV.	20.0	4.14	6	8200	7380	.90	.90	-
1.060	.580	JORDAN INTL.TRAD.	32.9	0.00	1	2900	1856	.62	.64	.02+
3.720	2.130	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	13.7	5.76	5	1200	4164	2.50	3.47	.03-
1.220	.960	ZARKA EDUCATION	g	0.00	4	1400	1461	1.04	1.05	.01+
2.250	1.690	UNIFIED CO.	11.0	4.78	16	13350	27986	2.11	2.09	.02-
1.200	.820	UNION LAND DEV.	S	0.00	2	700	581	.84	.83	.01-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 111.72	%CHG: -0.03		63	35455	54932			
3.730	2.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.8	2.88	7	3402	11729	3.45	3.47	.02+
2.500	2.710	JOR.PHOSPHATE MINES	26.6	0.00	3	1250	4250	2.27	3.40	.13+
10.400	8.720	JOR. PETROL.REFINARY	10.1	8.00	4	200	1999	9.96	10.00	.04+
3.560	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COMM.AGR.	35.0	0.00	1	250	650	2.61	2.60	.01-
7.950	6.420	JOR.WORSTED MILLS	9.0	3.57	1	1000	7000	6.95	7.00	.05+
4.580	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	20.2	5.42	8	1950	7159	3.65	3.69	.04+
7.350	4.250	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	12.8	4.29	4	450	2101	4.61	4.66	.05+
5.800	3.120	ARAB ALUM.IND.	8.9	8.33	1	200	720	3.52	3.60	.08+
.960	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	g	0.00	20	40600	24034	.60	.59	.01-
1.020	.540	NATIONAL INDS.	9.9	8.96	3	1000	670	.67	.67	-
1.540	.930	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	g	0.00	3	600	654	1.10	1.09	.01-
1.670	1.080	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	27.1	0.00	8	13500	19411	1.45	1.45	-
1.557	1.000	KAWTHER INVEST.	37.7	5.71	2	1260	1323	1.05	1.05	-
3.070	1.440	UNIV. MODR.INDS.	5.2	11.76	3	2250	3825	1.70	1.70	-
1.920	1.140	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	16.7	0.00	5	4000	5370	1.32	1.33	.01+
1.340	.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	25.3	0.00	2	4300	3999	.93	.93	-
2.460	1.750	EL -ZAY READY WEAR	P	0.00	2	86	158	1.85	1.85	-
1.490	.930	UNION CR. & VEG.	24.6	0.00	3	1000	1000	1.00	1.00	.
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 116.61	%CHG: +0.75		80	77298	96050			
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 153.77	%CHG: +0.34		189	354798	449519			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 03/02/1997

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
.700	.440	CENTRAL GEN.STORAGE	20.1	0.00	1	300	150	.50	.50	-
.790	.500	JOR.TRADE FAC.	15.7	0.00	24	52100	30208	.58	.59	.01+
.890	.700	UNION INV. 50%	68.9	0.00	3	5000	1100	.72	.72	.
.950	.370	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	13	16200	7131	.45	.44	.01-
+N 38.700	30.500	JOR TOURIST TRANS.CO	1.9	3.45	1	65000	1885000	30.50	29.00	1.50-
.640	.260	JOR.INDS.MATCH-JEMCO	g	0.00	1	1000	280	.29	.28	.01-
.800	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	E	0.00	3	1300	780	.61	.60	.01-
1.690	1.300	NATL. CHLORINE	E	0.00	1	500	705	1.41	1.41	-
.690	.450	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	g	0.00	6	4400	2071	.48	.47	.01-
.860	.520	NATL. TEXTILE	g	0.00	2	600	331	.55	.56	.01+
.920	.400	NATL.MULT.ENG.NAMICO	E	0.00	22	28794	13371	.48	.47	.01-
.740	.430	MAYZAR DIES & MOULDS	E	0.00	6	6250	3438	.56	.55	.01-
.990	.720	JORDAN STEEL	E	0.00	9	9850	7486	.76	.76	-
.700	.430	ARAB ELECT.INDS.	P	0.00	1	50	25	.51	.50	.01-
1.330	1.020	UNION TOBACCO 75%	E	0.00	7	61500	47970	1.03	1.03	.
.770	.570	RAZI PHARM. 65%	E	0.00	2	1200	312	.61	.61	.
.760	.390	INDS. ENG.	27.7	0.00	5	2400	1061	.45	.45	-
.820	.590	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	11	7450	5482	.74	.72	.01-
.950	.530	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.6	0.00	7	8850	5753	.66	.65	.01-
5.000	3.420	ARAB STEEL PIPES	10.2	6.67	2	11000	41250	3.69	3.75	.06+
GRAND TOTAL					127	283744	2053902			

Jordanian farmer sees rescue in Israeli technology and U.S. cash

By Dominic Evans
Reuters

SHOUNEH, Jordan — A Jordanian landowner whose Dead Sea banana plantations have been losing money for decades could be rescued by Israeli technology and U.S. cash.

Sheikh Sami Al Adwan owns hundreds of hectares of farmland in the Jordan Valley and hopes Israeli know-how can help him convert the loss-making land into a base for money-spinning projects like fish farming, industry and tourism.

"We want to get our land working, and they (Israelis) have the technology," Sheikh Adwan told Reuters Sunday as he hosted an Israeli and U.S. business delegation to his farm, which once made up part of the frontline of Arab-Israeli conflict.

"If they want to exploit it all, we'll give it to them," he said.

He indicated that traditional crops like vegetables, citrus fruit and bananas gave poor returns and farmers were heavily in debt.

Sheikh Adwan, wearing a flowing Arab headdress and a golden dagger, discussed business opportunities with Israeli businessman Zvi Shorer, chairman of the Chamber of Businesses in the northern Israeli town of Beit Shean.

Mr. Shorer said up to 50 businesses in Beit Shean were looking for opportunities in Jordan because of its cheap labour and because it could act as a bridge into other Arab markets.

The first clear business opportunities in the Jordan Valley were tourism and fish farming, already a success in Israel, he said.

"The sheikh has salty water that has no (agricultural) use...but we can make a fortune out of this water, breeding fish," he said.

Businessmen say Israeli companies have set up at least a dozen partnership projects in Jordan, most of them in textiles, since the two countries signed a peace treaty in 1994 which ended a 46-year state of war.

But popular hostility to Israel, especially since the election of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu last year, means cooperation with the Jewish state usually remains low profile.

An Israeli trade show last month in Amman prompted demonstrations outside the exhibition hall. Jordan's powerful engineers union has a blacklist to deter firms from dealing with Israel.

Multimillion dollar deals agreed in the wave of optimism after the peace deal was signed have fallen by the wayside.

Sheikh Adwan, whose land extends to within five kilometres of the Israeli-controlled West Bank border, said the Jewish state was no longer an enemy.

"For 30 years this land was a theatre of war and the first line of defence for Jordan and the whole Arab World," he said. "This land and its people suffered the tragedies of war... The time has come to reap the benefits of peace".

Mr. Shorer was accompanied by leaders of the Cleveland-based U.S.-Ohio Chamber of Commerce who said they could help raise capital to get Israeli-Jordanian projects off the ground.

He said opportunities for Israel to subcontract work in Jordan included a textile factory which could employ up to 200 people and plants to make car spare parts employing 50 people, as well as factories to produce anything from irrigation pipes to software.

Sheikh Adwan said he was also considering a mineral-water factory.

No deals have been finalised, but Mr. Shorer said the first agreement he expected to sign would be a contract to turn a nearby farm into a tourist motel.

"We'll call it the Honey Inn," he said.

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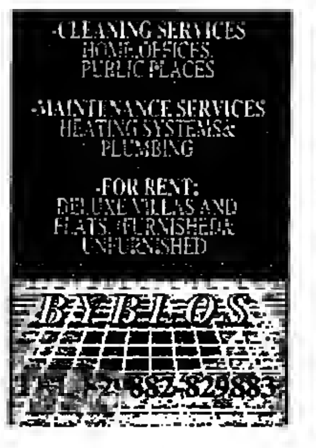

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Women's handball gets high priority in '97

JHF invited to Cyprus international tournament

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Handball Federation (JHF) has given the women's national team a high priority in its 1997 agenda which will be highlighted by their participation in a 12-team international championship in Cyprus this summer.

After abandoning the idea of hosting the Women's Asian Handball Championship here, the Cyprus championship is seriously set on the JHF's agenda after receiving an invitation from the their Cypriot counterpart.

JHF President Sari Hamdan Monday told the Jordan Times that the federation is waiting for the final go ahead from the Ministry of Youth to confirm participation.

"We have received the invitation, studied the matter and the issue of participation will soon be decided. " Hamdan said.

"Jordan's players need the experience and continued support to enable them to reach a competitive level." Hamdan added.

He explained many snags have always hindered the better preparation of the national team including the lack of financial support and absence of a full time coach.

There is also an urgent need to have more women's teams competing as there are only three teams actively taking part in the handball league.

"Al Arabi, Al Orthodoxi and Kufrsoum are the only women's team we have. We simply need to have more teams." he added.

The week-long championship in Cyprus with 12 teams participating will be a a good opportunity for the women's team to gain the experience they need for future meetings on different levels.

Following the 1997 Women's Handball Championship, the JHF will name the players who will have an extensive training programme to represent Jordan on the international level.

"Sixteen players will be chosen for the team who will have the chance to play against the Syrian teams in friendly matches in preparation for the tournament," he added.

"Although only three clubs have women's handball teams in the Kingdom there are a number of good players like Suhad Haddad and Abeer Obeidat who need just a little bit of support and serious training to play on a more competitive level," Hamdan said.

Liberian Milan's striker George Weah (R) heads for the ball during Milan vs Sampdoria Italian first division soccer match in Milan. Sampdoria beat champions AC Milan 3-2 to move to within two points of Juventus at the top of Italy's Serie A (Reuters photo)

Shearer hat-trick keeps Newcastle on course

LONDON (R) — England captain Alan Shearer produced a memorable 14-minute hat-trick to keep Newcastle United on line for the English Premier League title with a dramatic 4-3 win over Leicester City on Sunday.

But they were not the only championship-chasers in Europe to come from behind as real Madrid, Monaco and Sampdoria also recovered to keep their hopes intact.

England

After 77 minutes, Newcastle were trailing Leicester 3-1 despite having taken the lead in the third minute. But Shearer, a 15 million pounds ($24 million) pre-season buy from Blackburn Rovers stole the points with a dazzling first hat-trick for his new club.

First he rifled home a free-kick and then, with seven minutes remaining, he fired through a sea of legs to level the scores.

In injury time he was on hand to finish from close range to take the three points which leave Newcastle in fourth spot, five points adrift of leaders Manchester United.

Spain

Real Madrid stretched their lead over Barcelona at the top of the Spanish first division to five points by beating Deportivo Coruna 3-2.

Twice Deportivo went ahead through Flavio Conceicao and Corentin martins but these were quickly cancelled out by Christian Panucci and Femando Hierro who curled in the equaliser from a free-kick. Davor Suker secured the points for real.

The result added to the problems of Barcelona coach Bobby Robson, who was summoned to meet club president Jose Luis Nunez after seeing his side throw away a 2-0 lead at home for the second time in less than a month in the 2-2 draw with Oviedo.

Italy

The title race began to heat up as leaders Juventus were held 0-0 by lowly Cagliari while second-placed Sampdoria, reduced to 10 men after the 22nd minute dismissal of goalkeeper Fabrizio Ferron, came back to beat AC Milan 3-2.

Trailing 2-1 after two George Weah strikes, Sampdoria upset the odds when Yugoslavian defender Sinisa Mihajlovic blasted home a free-kick to equalise in the 74th minute and, five minutes later, winger Marco Carparelli added the shock winner.

France

Monaco stayed seven points clear at the top despite having captain Franck Dumas sent off after 55 minutes as midfielder Ali Benarbia scored twice in the space of four minutes to secure a 3-3 draw at Lyon.

Bastia beat Strasbourg 3-1 at home to join Paris St. Germain in second place.

Eriksson says he's Blackburn bound

MILAN (AFP) — Sampdoria's Swedish coach Sven-Goran Eriksson confirmed Sunday that he would be managing English Premier League club Blackburn next season — despite earlier reports to the contrary.

"The decision's final, I will be going to England." Eriksson said after watching his side defeat Milan 3-2 at the San Siro with 10 men.

Earlier in the week, Italian newspapers bad carried reports that Eriksson was set to join Rome club Lazio after asking Blackburn to release him from a preliminary agreement.

"The decision was made a month-and-a-half ago, nothing has changed," added Eriksson.

It had been reported that Eriksson had been unhappy with Blackburn's designated signings and had a stormy session with the 1995 English champions board at their last meeting.

Furious Blackburn chairman Robert Coar bad declared on Friday that Eriksson was still on course to join them despite the reports.

Coar was unhappy that the rumours linking Eriksson to the vacant coach's position at Lazio were undermining Rovers' plans to make his summer takeover from caretaker-boss Tony Parkes as smooth as possible.

Lazio parted company with coach Zdenek Zeman on Monday after a catalogue of poor results and majority shareholder Sergio Cragnotti immediately brought in club president Dino Zoff to take charge of team affairs.

Zoff, the former Italy and Juventus goalkeeper, was Zemen's predecessor and was instrumental in taking Paul Gascoigne to Lazio.

The 54-year-old Zoff, who celebrated with a 3-2 victory in his first match in charge, has been told by the Italian coaches association boss Azeglio Vicini that he cannot both be president and coach.

Jordan scores 45 as Bulls beat Sonics in finals rematch

SEATTLE (R) — Michael Jordan scored 45 points and his Chicago Bulls sent a message to the Seattle Supersonics with an emphatic 91-84 victory Sunday in their first meeting since last year's NBA finals.

Again playing without suspended NBA rebounding leader Dennis Rodman, the defending champion Bulls improved to 20-4 on the road and 41-5 overall, both league bests.

They also snapped a three-game losing streak in Seattle and improved to 4-0 on their West Coast swing.

"We're still a good team without Dennis and we can still contend for a championship without Dennis," Jordan said.

Jordan (19-of-28 from the field) blistered a series of defenders including defensive player of the year Gary Payton.

"When we cut it to two, he made two incredible jump shots," Seattle coach George Karl said. "There's no way you can say, 'defend him better.'"

The Sonics were held to a season low in points. Payton had 24, Shawn Kemp 16 and Detlef Schrempf 14.

At Los Angeles, Shaquille O'Neal scored 24 points before straining his right knee as the Lakers set season highs for points in a quarter, half and game in a 129-99 rout of the Washington Bullets, their sixth straight win.

The Lakers scored 46 points in the first quarter and 78 points in the first half.

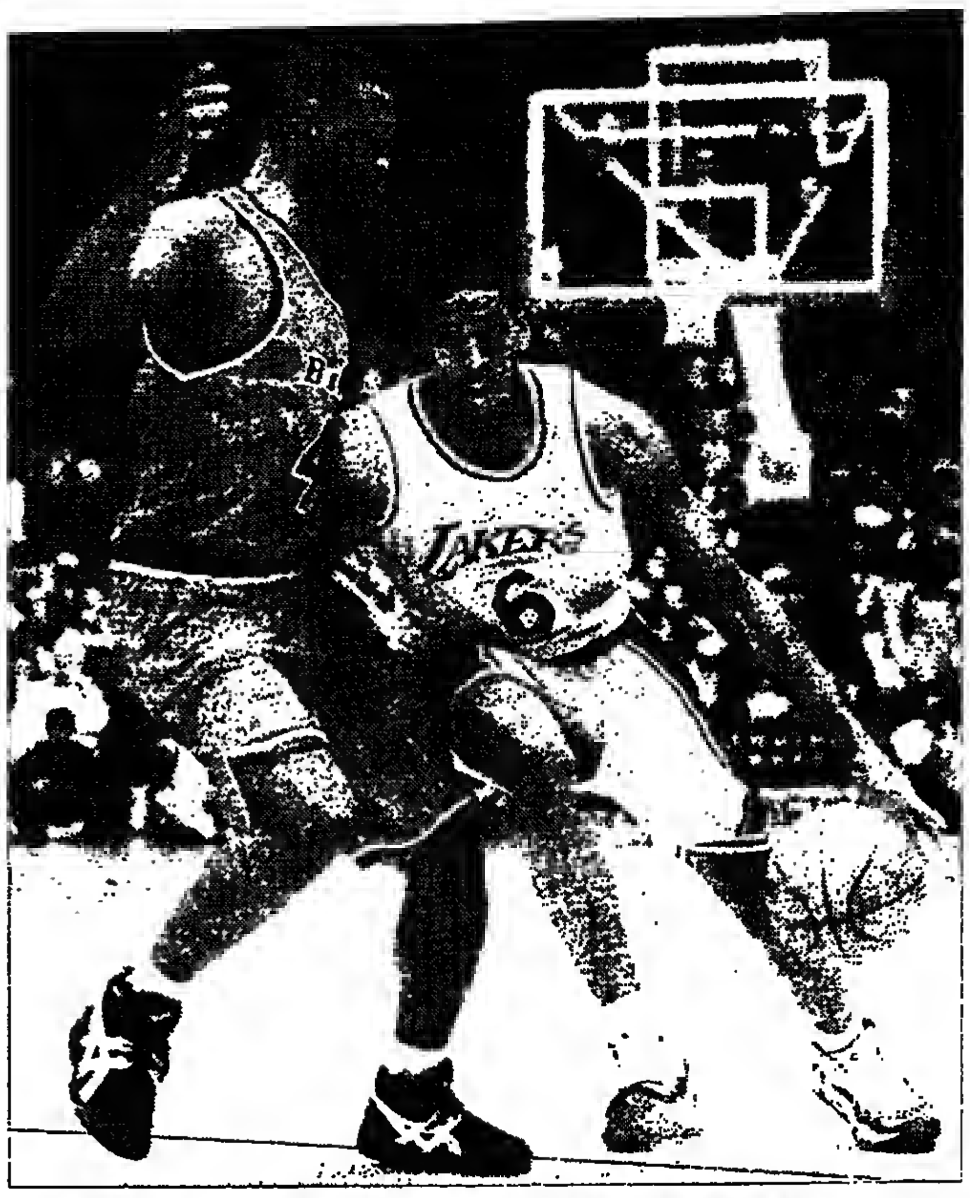
Eddie Jones scored 18 points and Nick Van Exel added 17 for the Lakers, who moved two games ahead of second-place Seattle in the Pacific Division and tied Miami for the league's second-best record (34-12) behind Chicago (41-5).

In New York, Glen Rice, who averaged 32 points a game in January, began February with 40 points to lead the Charlotte Hornets to a 99-93 victory over the Knicks.

Rice, who has averaged 37 points in his last four games, hit 12-of-20 from the field, including 4-of-5 from three-point range, and 12-of-15 free throws.

"It's total confidence. I feel I can do no wrong. Wherever I shoot the ball, it's going in." he said.

The loss snapped the 15-game home winning streak of the Knicks, who were without centre Patrick Ewing (strained groin) for a second game. John Starks led New York with 26 points.



Los Angeles Lakers Eddie Jones (6) drives around Washington Bulle· Calbert Cheaney dnring third quarter play in their NBA game. The Lakers won 129-99 (Reuters photo)

In Orlando, Rony Seikaly scored 29 points as the surging Magic raced to a 103-90 victory over the shorthanded Houston Rockets, who lost their fourth straight.

The Magic have won seven of their last eight games.

Kevin Willis had a season-high 23 points and 16 rebounds, but Hakeem Olajuwon was limited to 17 points for the rockets, whose Midwest Division lead over the Utah Jazz was cut to one-half game.

Houston welcomed back all-star guard Clyde Drexler, who had 12 points, eight rebounds and five assists after missing two games with a strained hamstring. But all-star forward Charles Barkley sat out his third straight game and seventh in the last eight with a sprained ankle.

At Detroit, the Phoenix Suns salvaged the finale of a five-game road trip with a 106-97 upset of the Pistons, who had a five-game winning streak snapped.

Mark Bryant scored 21 points and Cedric Ceballos and Wesley Person 18 each for the Suns, who ended a six-game losing streak.

Otis Thorpe scored a season-high 27 points and Grant Hill added 17 for the Pistons.

In Miami, ex-Cavalier John Crotty scored eight of his 13 points in the fourth quarter as the Heat rallied for an 80-76 win over Cleveland, sweeping the home-and-home series.

Tim Hardaway scored 20 points and Alonzo Mourning 15 for the Heat, who have won four in a row and nine of their last 11. Cleveland has lost 11 of 14.

At Indiana, Travis Best hit the go-ahead three-pointer with 42 seconds left and Derrick McKey blocked a pair of shots by Kendall gill in the final 27 seconds as the pacers erased a 20-point deficit in a 92-90 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Indiana's Reggie Miller 28 points. Gill led the Nets with 32 points.

In Denver, Dale Ellis scored 21 points as the Nuggets cooled off former teammate Dikembe Mutombo and the Atlanta Hawks, 115-104.

Mark Jackson scored 17 points and Antonio McDyess added 16 for Denver, which never trailed after the first two minutes and won for just the seventh time in their last 20 games.

Mookie Blaylock scored 29 points and Eldridge Recasner 23 for the Hawks, who had won 14 of their last 16 games.

At Minnesota, Tom Gugliotta had 27 points as the Timberwolves held off a furious rally for a 103-102 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Timberwolves managed just their second win in their last 19 meetings with Portland.

Kenny Anderson had 26 points and Gary Trent matched his career high with 24 for the blazers, 0-4 on their road trip.

In Boston, Bryant Reeves had a career-high 33 points and 18 rebounds and rookie Shareef Abdur-Rahim scored 28 points to lead the Vancouver Grizzlies to a 102-92 victory over the Celtics in a game between the two worst teams in the NBA. The Grizzlies snapped an eight-game losing streak and improved the league's worst record to 9-40. The loss was the eighth in nine games for the Celtics (10-33).

AFC wins pro bowl on Blanchard field goal in overtime

HONOLULU (R) — Cary Blanchard kicked a 37-yard field goal 8:16 into overtime to lift the AFC to a 26-23 victory over the NFC in the Pro Bowl Sunday.

Blanchard had missed two of three field attempts, including a 41-yarder earlier in the overtime period, before kicking the game-winning field goal.

Pro Bowl MVP Mark Brunell hit tight end Ben Coates with a 43-yard pass to set up the winning kick. Brunell, who led Jacksonville to the AFC championship game, averted a near sack by John Randle and lofted a long pass to Coates to the NFC 23-yard line.

Brunell connected with Tim Brown on an 80-yard touchdown pass with 44 seconds left in regulation to tie the game at 23-23. Brown raced past cornerback Aeneas Williams down the right sideline and caught a long pass in stride from Brunell.

"Coming from a left-handed quarterback, that catch is no joke," said Brown. "I just concentrated real hard to stay with the ball."

The NFC had a chance to win the game in regulation, but John Kasay missed a 39-yard field goal in the final seconds.

While the NFC has won the last 13 super bowls from the AFC, the Pro Bowl has been a more competitive event. The conferences had split the previous 12 meetings in Honolulu since 1985.

Gus Frerotte hit Cris Carter with a 53-yard touchdown pass and then connected with tight end Wesley Walls on the two-point conversion with 4:07 remaining in the fourth quarter to give the NFC a 23-16 lead.

Ashley Ambrose's 54-yard interception return for a touchdown 11 seconds into the fourth quarter had given the AFC a 16-15 lead. Ambrose cut in front of receiver Irving Fryar, intercepted a pass by Kerry Collins and raced down the right sideline untouched.

But Frerotte and Carter executed a perfect stop-and-go on cornerback Terry McDaniel down the right sideline for the winning touchdown. A pump fake by Frerotte froze McDaniel as Carter faked a cut and accelerated down the sideline.

Two-time NFL MVP Bren Favre, who led Green Bay to a victory in Super Bowl XXXI last Sunday, hit lineman Randall McDaniel with a five-yard touchdown pass on a tackle-eligible play and Kasay kicked a 20-yard field goal in the first quarter to give the NFC a 9-0 lead.

Blanchard kicked a 28-yard field goal with 27 seconds left in the second quarter for the AFC's only points in the first half.

Barry Sanders scored on a six-yard run with 8:51 left in the third quarter to increase the NFC's lead to 15-3.

A three-yard touchdown run by Curtis Martin pulled the AFC within 15-10 with 5:55 left in the third quarter.

The NFC leads the overall series, 15-12.

Winning players received $20,000 each and the losers collected $10,000.

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Yuri Kalitvintsev (L) of Dynamo Kiev fights for the ball with Valery Kechinov of Spartak Moscow during the Commonwealth of Independent States champions soccer Cup final in Moscow. Dynamo Kiev of Ukraine won the Cup beating Spartak Moscow 3-2 (Reuters photo)

England aim for 2006 World Cup

LONDON (AFP) — England intend to pursue a bid to host the 2006 World Cup finals despite being told that Germany was the official European candidate.

"We cannot sit back and allow this sort of thing to happen to English football," FA Chief Executive Kelly Said.

"We have a duty to the whole of the English game to make sure our case is properly heard. If we were to lose a fair, open and honest debate, we would accept that just as we accepted defeat on the football field."

Kelly thought England's chances of winning the 2006 World Cup could be improved because of the way in which UEFA had handled the matter.

"We can certainly go forward ourselves and apply to FIFA, and we intend to do so," he said.

FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper told BBC radio the world body would not give any additional weight to a German bid backed by UEFA.

"It's quite clear in the regulations that each and every of the national associations is entitled to bid," he said.

"We have never had a continental confederation doing this on their behalf and there is nothing foreseen in the statutes for that to happen this time.

"The decision is taken solely on the technical content of the bids submitted and how they correspond to the terms and requirements," he added.

England coach Glen Hoddle said: "England's case must be heard, and it is a very strong one indeed.

"England is the place to be for top players from all around the world at the moment. I'm sure they would want to come here for a World Cup.

"Euro 96 has been widely acknowledged both on and off the pitch.

It was the festival of football that everyone wanted it to be.

"But above all by the year 2006 it will be 40 years since we last hosted a world cup. How much longer are we expected to wait?"

FIFA Vice-President David Will of Scotland, an observer at the Lisbon meeting of UEFA's executive committee which backed Germany's bid, said the decision had been taken according to the rules.

"There was certainly no underhand dealing," said will. "In fact, it was a comparatively straightforward discussion.

"What happened is that two years ago UEFA decided it wanted a change to the FIFA rules meaning that only one association in each continental confederation should make a world cup bid.

"At that time Germany was the only country in Europe interested in 2006 and UEFA decided then it would totally support a German bid.

"Now England have joined the race but UEFA feels that having said that to Germany it is committed and has a problem in reversing that commitment.

"That is as far as it went and therefore it was decided to point out to the FA that the commitment to Germany had been made."

UEFA President Lennart Johansson said the confusion was caused by "A terrible breakdown in communications".

But former FA Chairman Sir Bert Millichip, another observer in Lisbon, was adamant that there had been no previous agreement, flatly contradicting Johansson's claim.

"I can confirm that no decision was ever minuted on supporting any specific country from Europe for the 2006 world cup bid by the UEFA executive prior to last Wednesday," said Sir Bert.

But UEFA General Secretary Gerhard Aigner told the Times newspaper: "It seems unfortunate that a former vice-president of UEFA (Sir Bert) should have forgotten that he was present at meetings in 1993, 1994 and 1995, all of which endorsed the German candidature for 2006."

Hingis sets eyes on Graf

TOKYO (AFP) — Swiss teenager Martina Hingis, the youngest Grand Slam champion this century, sees a tough final step to get past Steffi Graf and become the youngest number one ranked player in tennis history.

"I just go from one to the other tournaments and we'll see what happens. I think I have a pretty good chance to get as high as possible," Hingis said.

"Right now, I'm number two to the world but it's also hard to stay there," she added.

Monica Seles holds the record as youngest No. 1 ranking after she reached the top spot in March 1991 at 17 years, three months and 19 days — seven days younger than Tracy Austin.

Seles was also the youngest Grand Slam champion by winning the 1990 French Open at 16 years, six months, but Hingis eclipsed her by winning the Australian Open a week ago at 16 years, three months and 26 days.

Charlotte "Lottie" Dod remains the youngest major championship winner, having won Wimbledon in 1887 when she was two months shy of her 16th birthday. A Grand Slam system of the four major events was not in place then.

"It's a big change," Hingis said of her victory at Melbourne. "I made a big step forward, especially, I won my first big Grand Slam tournament. It's great. It's something nobody can take it away from you."

Hingis said her turning point came last year when she became the youngest Wimbledon champion by winning the doubles title with Helena Sukova.

"I practiced a lot since then and reached the semifinals at the U.S. Open. I won my first tournament at Filderstadt in Germany after that, and just have kept going ... it's crazy, I've never lost before the semifinals. It's a kind of scary," she said.

Graf and Jana Novotna of the Czech republic were the only players to have beaten Hingis since the U.S. Open, while the Swiss remained unbeaten this season winning at Sydney, Melbourne and Tokyo.

But a long awaited showdown between the current and probable future tennis queens at the Toray Pan Pacific Open final Sunday was scrapped at the last minute when Graf pulled out with a left knee injury that she severely aggravated during her semi-final match.

Since the WTA introduced the new total-points ranking system, many have said it gives an advantage to those who are healthy and free from injuries.

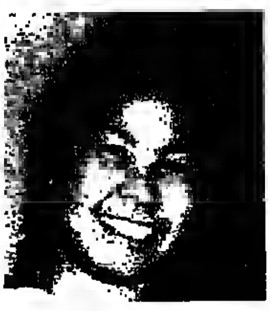
Graf, 27, managed to play only 11 tournaments last season because of injuries and withdrew from two of them with the knee problem in October. She said she plans to take part in the same amount of tournaments this season, while Hingis said she would play 20 events.

"Maybe I can gather a few more tournaments and hopefully my injuries going to be somewhat okay, but I'm only going to play if I'm fit and ready," said Graf.

"So the ranking system does not make me change my calendar or anything. I do think that it's a not very good system, but it's not up to me to decide that," she added.

The German star, who holds a 5-1 win-loss record against Hingis, said it was difficult to compare herself with Hingis, but pointed out that Hingis' backhand is her "biggest weapon," saying "she can play it extremely fast down the line."

"That's really uncommon in tennis. Most players play cross-court. She plays a lot of down-the-lines, especially off her backhand — that's what nobody is very used to, and that's definitely her strongest weapon," said Graf.



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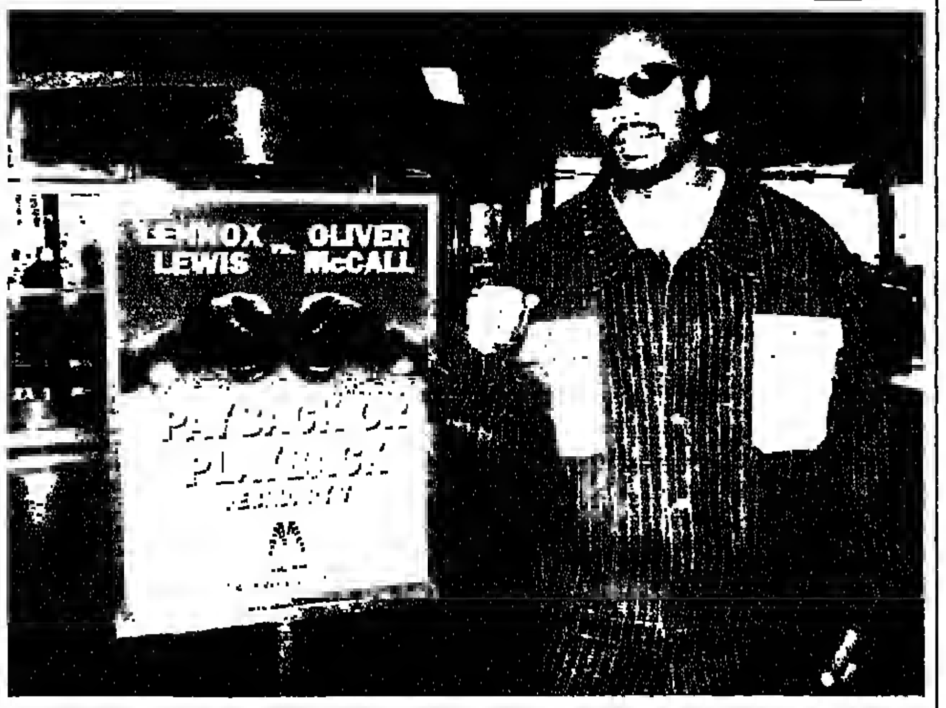

WBC heavyweight No. 1 contender Lennox Lewis, of London, poses by a sign advertising his upcoming fight with No.2 contender Oliver McCall after arriving from a training camp in Arizona. The February 7 fight will fill the vacant WBC heavyweight title vacated by Mike Tyson (Reuters photo).

Klinsmann fears for quality of soccer

BONN (R) — Germany captain Juergen Klinsmann has called on international soccer chiefs to stop what he called the "milking of football's cash cow" because it will destroy the quality of the game and the health of top players.

Klinsmann said the prospect of a European League, the continued expansion of international football and the huge money flooding into the game from television was leading to too many matches for top players.

"As long as the clubs make more money and the players earn more, there is no end to all this. UEFA or FIFA must stop this development. Or the players will say 'it can't go on'," he was quoted as saying by the German magazine Kicker this weekend.

"The quality of the game must be paramount and not the continued milking of football's cash cow. It appears that all the financial possibilities must be taken advantage of — to the cost of the top players. It is getting very difficult to get your body through all this."

Klinsmann, one of the highest earners at Bayern Munich, said there was no doubt that the planned expansion of the European Cup to include second-placed teams from major leagues would lead to a European League.

"It is getting more and more difficult for international players to play all the matches. Qualifying for European Championships and World Cups is getting longer and longer, as are the tournaments.

"Now the European League is on its way because this event is no longer a Champions' League. Getting all the players to show solidarity about this is a long shot. But that is perhaps the best way to get the message across to FIFA."

"The quality is suffering. Look at the World Cup final in 1994. It kicked off at 12 noon (when temperatures were at their highest in the United States but television audience prospects were at their best. That has nothing to do with football."

Klinsmann said he also feared for the future of the game after the Bosman ruling, especially the future of young players. FIFA and UEFA also needed to act to stop major clubs buying up too many players to the detriment of their rivals.

"The first contract for an 18-year-old should be for four to five years at least, like in France, so that youth work is not destroyed," he said.

"UEFA and FIFA must also have a limit for the number of players a club can have on contract. Other than that, the big clubs will buy up all the market — not to boost themselves but to weaken their rivals.

"The limit should be at 22 players. A limit for foreign players (in the Bundesliga) should be set at five or six."

Amman Little League begins basketball season

AMMAN (J.T.) — The gymnasium is once again full of running, screaming kids, bouncing orange balls and parents shouting to encourage their sons and daughters. Welcome to Amman Little League Association (ALLA) basketball.

A new season for Little League basketball began the week of Jan. 24. This year's league has five divisions, 25 teams, with more than 250 boys and girls from age 6-16 playing.

Amman Little League serves as an athletic outlet for Amman's youth year-round. The fall has soccer, the winter basketball and in the spring children play baseball.

A new outdoor playing field, adjacent to Ghamadan Park on the airport road south of Amman, is now being built but work has stopped temporarily while another JD30,000 is being sought to finish the complex which will accommodate both baseball and soccer matches in the future.

A cooperative effort between both Jordanians and expatriates of various nationalities Amman Little League provides instruction in the fundamentals of sport. Begun in 1978 by U.S. embassy personnel who wanted to create a sports programme for the kids, Amman Little League soon attracted Jordanians for the same reason.

ALLA chairperson Vivian Musa says: "We draw children from all schools, both public and private, in Amman and Jordanians and foreigners play side by side."

Teams are sponsored by local businesses, who through the years have generously supported the programmes of Amman Little League.

Results from the week of Jan. 31:

JUNIORS I (6 -17 years)
M.E.C. — J.R.P. 12-10
JAB — CHARACTERS 12-7
JUNIORS II (8 -9 years)
OPEL — JAMCO 23-18
AL HANNA — ARAMEX 38-27
MDS I (10-11 years)
SILHOUETTE — ARAMEX 39-30
RMCC — ARAB CONST. 20-18
MDS II (12-13 years)
CHAPPEE — UCM 46-44
BUDGET — AMMAN HOS. 43-40
SENIORS (14-16 years)
LINCOLN — AQABA SHIP. 50-32
IVECO — VISA 48-32

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& TANNAH HIRSCH

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NORTH
♠A
♥A 10 9 2
♦K 10 4
♣K Q J 5 2

WEST
♠K 10 3
♥K 7 6 4
♦8 6
♣9 7 6 4

EAST
♠4 2
♥Q 6 5 3
♦A 9 3 2
♣A 10 3

SOUTH
♠Q J 8 8 7 6 5
♥J
♦Q J 7 5
♣8

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Eight of ♦

Follow the play of this hand. Did anyone err? If so, who and when?

South's jump to three spades is a preemptive action based on a long suit with little in the way of defense. With a hand containing four prime cards, one of which was the ace of trumps, North elected to raise to game.

West led the eight of diamonds, East won the ace and returned the deuce, a suit preference signal for clubs. *Declarer won the second trick* in dummy, cashed the ace of trumps and ace of hearts, then came to hand with a heart ruff to lead the queen of trumps. West grabbed the king, led a club to the ace and ruffed the diamond return for a one-trick set. What's your verdict?

Declarer plainly erred in not trying to cut the defenders' communications to prevent the ruff. After winning the second trick on the table, declarer should have cashed the ace of hearts, then led the ten. If East covers, declarer ruffs, returns to the board with the ace of trumps and leads the nine of hearts. When East follows low, declarer discards the singleton club and now the defenders cannot score a diamond ruff. In all, declarer loses one trick in each suit except clubs. (If East doesn't cover the ten of hearts, South sluffs the club immediately.)

However, South should never have been given the chance to make the contract. West's diamond lead was unlikely to be a singleton — that would give declarer a secondary five-card suit in addition to a primary seven-card suit. Therefore, East should allow declarer to win the first diamond. Now the ace of diamonds will serve as a line of communication between the defenders, and the contract can always be set.

The United States Information Service in Amman has a vacancy for a Director of Courses (DOC) to administer an English Teaching Program (ETP). The DOC administers the employment, training and the supervision of ten teachers and four administrative staff and is responsible for the content, structure and finances of the ETP. The incumbent should be a U.S. citizen and have an M.A. in Teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL/TESOL), with extensive teaching experience, as well as supervisory and administrative experience. **Application forms are available at the main U.S. Embassy gate.**

ARABIC FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

The Language Centre at the University of Jordan announces that the Intensive Course in Modern Standard Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages will commence on February 1, 1997 and will last for 16 weeks.

Those interested please call at the Language *Centre for registration or further information.*

The deadline for registration is Wednesday, February 5.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran to free South African

TEHRAN (AFP) — A South African detained in Iran for nearly three weeks is to be released shortly, Iranian officials said Monday. An official source, who requested anonymity, told AFP that 2·-year-old Stuart Timm would be freed by Tuesday morning. He has been held without charge since being arrested on Jan. 12. Mr. Timm was working on a social programme in neighbouring Turkmenistan and visited Iran with a Swiss companion to buy leather when they were arrested. There was no indication that the Swiss, Daniel Baumann, would also be freed. Iranian officials and the local media have not announced the arrest of the two foreigners. South African foreign ministry said Wednesday that it had lodged "a strong protest" with Iran over Mr. Timm's detention without trial. "They (the Iranians) claim his travel documents are not in order, but have not explained the reason for his lengthy detention," foreign affairs spokesman Marco Boni said. "They say investigations are continuing." South Africa "lodged the department's strongest protest at Mr. Timm's detention ... and registered concern that Mr. Timm had not been charged or freed within a reasonable period," Mr. Boni said. South Africa's ambassador to Iran, Moosa Moolla, visited Mr. Timm in prison on Saturday and found him in good health, he added.

Egyptian 'spy' to remain in detention

CAIRO (AFP) — A court on Monday extended the detention of an Egyptian accused of spying for Israel for a further 45 days, judicial sources said. Emad Ismail, 24, was arrested in October and along with an Israeli Druze citizen Azzam Azzam was charged in November of spying for the Jewish state. It is the second time that Ismail's detention has been extended for a 45-day period. Ismail told the state security court on Monday that he had been tortured during interrogation by security service agents in a bid to make him confess, but he denied he had any links with Israel's external security service Mossad. However, prosecutor Ashraf Al Ashmawi denied Ismail had been tortured, insisting he had only been interrogated by state prosecutors and that he had given conflicting information during questioning. The prosecutor presented the court with documents alleging invisible ink had been found in clothes seized from Ismail's house. He also presented photos allegedly showing Ismail in the Jewish state in the company of two Arab-Israeli citizens who are alleged to have recruited the Egyptian into the service of Mossad.

Iran's singer attacks radio and TV

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's top Persian classical singer has protested to the state-run radio and television organisation (IRIB) for playing his songs without his authorisation, newspapers said Monday. "Your organisation takes the liberty to act in every way it pleases: you broadcast artistic works without permission, censor them on whim and trample on the most basic right of an artist," Mohammad Reza Sbajarian said in a letter to IRIB chief Ali Larijani. "I have repeatedly stated my displeasure over this trend and clearly say that I do not wish to see my voice aired on the radio and television," said the letter, which was published in the newspapers. "The organisation should learn that it does not own artistic works, that they are a property of their creator," Mr. Sbajarian added, accusing the IRIB of "preaching moral values all day while itself failing to respect them."

Kuwait deputies want segregation

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — A parliamentary committee is pushing for the segregation of men and women at concerts, fashion shows and other forms of public entertainment in Kuwait, the Arab Times newspaper reported on Monday. No such mixed events would be allowed if the committee's bill is approved by parliament and becomes law, said the legislative committee's Munaizel Al Enizi who was quoted by the English-language daily. Fashion shows for women only would be allowed under the bill, he added. Islamist deputies have criticised the government for permitting concerts or fashion shows anended recently by both men and women.
rsed.

Tehran papers report on missing writer

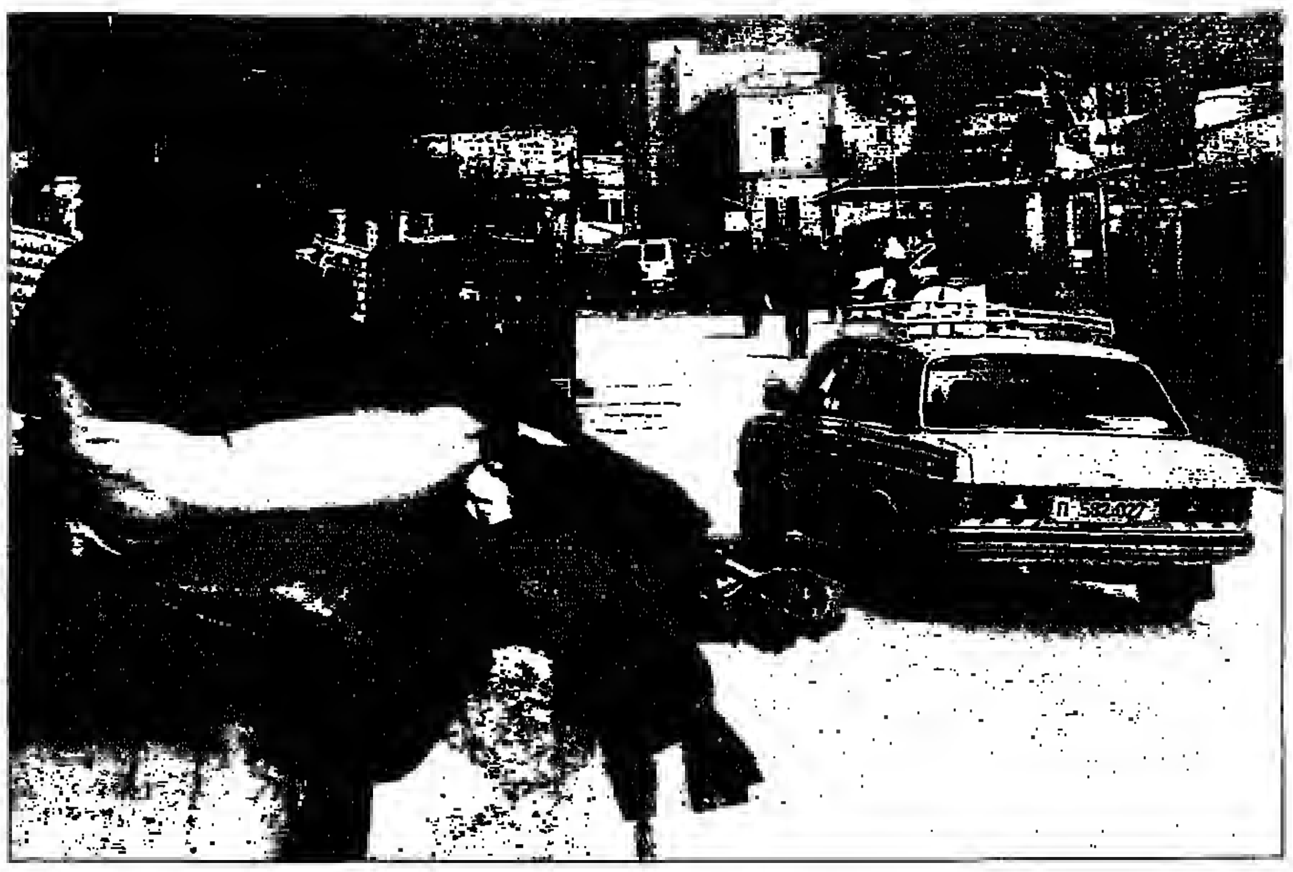
TEHRAN (AFP) — Newspapers here published reports Monday on the missing Iranian writer Faraj Sarkuhi whose disappearance has raised concern among Western human rights groups and governments. The English-language daily Iran News ran a news agency dispatch on the Swedish government's intervention in the Sarkuhi affair. Swedish Deputy Foreign Minister Pierre Schori said Friday that Stockholm had "asked our embassy in Tehran to try to get information from the Iranian authorities ... and is working within the European Union to address the issue with Tehran." While the Iranian authorities have remained silent on the subject, the government Iran newspaper referred to Western concern over Sarkuhi and quoted a Voice of America report. "After Germany, the Swedes are calling on the Iranian government to provide information on the writer's fate," it said. Several European and American human rights organisations have said Sarkuhi had disappeared for a second time and was possibly arrested, after having already gone missing between Nov. 3 and Dec. 20. Mr. Sarkuhi, 49, is the editor-in-chief of the literary monthly Adineh. He was among 134 writers who signed a petition in October 1994 demanding more freedom of expression.

Iranian to divorce 'gluttonous' spouse

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian woman fed up with her 'gluttonous' husband has filed for a divorce, a newspaper reported Monday. Ashraf, 37, told a court in the northeastern city of Mashhad that her husband was a "gluttonous man who only thinks about himself and his belly and nothing else." "If he doesn't like the food or the meal is a bit late in coming, he slams the dishes against the wall and starts cursing." "If I say a word, he beats me up." "He is an uncourteous man with an ungracious manner in front of guests and I am tired of him."

Old bandage causes cancer scare

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Surgeons operating on a Syrian man suspected of having stomach cancer were stunned when the tumour turned out to be a bandage left inside the patient after a previous operation — 10 years ago. Ahmad Sayyed, 43, had been complaining of constant vomiting and X-rays had showed what appeared to be tumour in the stomach, the Tishrin newspaper reported Monday.



An Israeli soldier keeps watch from a sandbagged position on Shuhada Street in Hebron as a Palestinian taxi proceeds up the section of the road opened on Monday for the first time since the 1994 massacre of Arabs at the Ibrahimi Mosque by a Jewish settler (Reuters photo)

PNA minister admits Palestinian was tortured to death in custody

NABLUS (Agencies) — A Palestinian land dealer who died in custody over the weekend was tortured by his Palestinian interrogators, the justice minister said in an interview published Monday.

The death of Yousef Baba, 32, brought to 12 the number of Palestinians who have died in detention since Yasser Arafat's self-rule government took control of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in May 1994.

Human rights groups, including the London-based Amnesty International, have said Palestinian security forces have engaged in systematic human rights violations, including the mistreatment of detainees.

Baba was summoned to the office of Nablus Governor Mahmoud Aloul on Jan. 3, held in detention from that day and died in Nablus' Rafidiya Hospital on Saturday. Baba told a nurse before losing consciousness that he was badly beaten by his interrogators. He had welts on the right side of his body, and his right arm was bruised and swollen.

An autopsy showed that the detainee "was subjected to tough violence which caused his death," Justice Minister Freih Abu Medein told the Palestinian daily Al Hayat Al Jedidah in an interview published Monday.

The attorney general, Khaled Kidreh, confirmed Monday that Baba was detained without an arrest warrant.

Baba's family has claimed the businessman was detained because he refused to sell a certain parcel of land near Nablus to Palestinian police officers.

Baba's brother, Omar, said Monday that the family had not been shown a copy of the autopsy report. "When we asked for the report, the governor, Mahmoud Aloul, said it was missing," Mr. Omar Baba, a partner in his brother's real estate company, told the Associated Press.

Mr. Abu Medein said Baba "had been illegally imprisoned and was subjected to extreme torture which led to his death."

"The dangerous thing is that Baba was arrested illegally by an agency which had no right to detain or interrogate him, and he was not presented either to civil police or the public prosecutor," Mr. Abu Medein said.

The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW) said Baba was arrested for "collaboration" with Israel, but added his family insisted the real reason was a property dispute with his cousin.

Baba was hospitalised for the first time on Jan. 24, "but he was then returned to interrogation despite his poor health condition," Mr. Abu Medein said.

"He was returned to the hospital on Jan. 29, when he was bleeding and suffering from an infection. His condition continued to worsen until he died," he said, adding that Baba's file in the hospital had been stolen.

He said those involved in Baba's death had been detained, including a doctor in the security services, but that Baba's interrogators had not yet been questioned. "The investigation is underway," he said.

Amnesty released a scathing report last year condemning Palestinian police for resorting to torture and illegal detentions.

According to the Washington-based Solidarity International for Human Rights group, 12 Palestinians have been tortured to death while under interrogation since the Palestinian National Authority began taking control of the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank in 1994 under interim peace deals with Israel.

The authority denies systematic torture but has investigated prisoners' deaths in detention and promised to fight abuses. In August, a Palestinian military court sentenced three Palestinian policemen to long jail terms after finding them guilty of torturing a prisoner to death.

Officials said military intelligence was responsible for most of the cases of human rights abuses and torture.

Netanyahu invites Pope to Jerusalem

VATICAN CITY (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu invited Pope John Paul II to visit Jerusalem at the end of their 20 minute meeting on Monday.

"We are waiting for you in Jerusalem," the Israeli leader told the Pope before a group of journalists. "God bless Israel," replied the pontiff.

A papal visit to Jerusalem, which John Paul II has repeatedly said is one of his dreams, has been on the cards for some time.

During a visit to the Vatican in Dec. 1995 by Leah Rabin, the widow of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the Pope said he had accepted an invitation to visit Jerusalem.

"All there remains is to fix a date," the Pope said at the time.

Vatican officials described the meeting of the two men to discuss the Middle East peace process and the thorny issue of the future of Jerusalem as "cordial."

The Pope made no public commitment, and an official Vatican statement also gave no response to Mr. Netanyahu's invitation to make a "pilgrimage to the Holy Land as soon as possible."

The Pope appeared upbeat, joking with the Israeli delegation during an exchange of gifts ceremony after 20 minutes of private talks.

The Pope told Mr. Netanyahu's wife Sara, "you look like a Polish girl," and she said, "I am," pointing out she has roots in the pontiff's native land.

The talks between the two men, who met for the first time, were expected to focus on the status of Jerusalem and the progress of Mideast peace efforts.

Mr. Netanyahu arrived from an economic forum in Davos, Switzerland, where he held talks with Egyptian and Palestinian leaders.

The talks helped create "a new attitude, maybe a new beginning, in Mideast peacemaking," Mr. Netanyahu said Sunday.

Jerusalem is one of the most delicate issues in Mideast peace negotiations, and in relations between the Jewish state and Holy See. But the communique made no mention of the issue of Jerusalem.

It did, however, stress that the Vatican was closely following Middle East peace negotiations and noted the Pope has recently called for a "concrete peace respecting the dignity and the rights of all," referring to Israelis and Arabs, Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The Vatican seeks a special, neutral "open city" status for Jerusalem backed by international guarantees.

Mr. Netanyahu Monday also had on his agenda meetings with Italian leaders during the day before returning to Israel.

U.N. continues Cyprus talks with little to show

NICOSIA (AFP) — U.N. special envoy Han Sung-Joo met President Glafcos Clerides on Monday for the second time in four days, without any sign of progress towards a resumption of peace talks on divided Cyprus.

"I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic, I am hopeful," Mr. Han told reporters after the meeting with Mr. Clerides, the Greek-Cypriot leader.

His mission is part of "proximity talks before we recommend to the Secretary General (Kofi Annan) to invite the two leaders to discuss the Cyprus issue in direct talks," the South Korean envoy said.

It was Mr. Han's second meeting with Mr. Clerides since Thursday. He has also held two rounds of talks with Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash aimed at breaking the deadlock by resuming direct talks, which were suspended in October 1994.

There has so far been no progress, said Yiannakis Cassoulides, spokesman for the Clerides government.

Mr. Han himself admitted after his meetings with Mr. Denktash that it was a tough task. "The window (of opportunity) is closed but not locked. Our job is to open it," he said.

On Tuesday, he is to meet the veteran Turkish-Cypriot leader for a third round of talks and hold a final session with Mr. Clerides the next day before ending his week-long mission. Mr. Han leaves on Thursday for Athens and Ankara.

The Cypriot government has bought a torpedo boat from Israel that is to be delivered in August, a military source said Monday.

The source, asking not to be named, did not disclose the price of the deal but told AFP it was financed by Greek-Cypriot businessmen and negotiated two months ago.

State television reported Saturday that an Israeli-built boat was joining the coast guard, which has three vessels. Cyprus also plans to buy other arms and telecommunications equipment from the Jewish state, it said.

The Cypriot navy has only one large rapid patrol boat, the Salamis.

The United Nations, the United States and Britain have all warned that the island, with a population of only around 800,000, is already heavily over-armed.

Tension rose sharply in Cyprus on Jan. 4 when the Greek-Cypriots announced the purchase of long-range ground-to-air missiles from Russia, due for deployment in mid-1998.

Israelis partially reopen Hebron street

HEBRON (Agencies) — A street running through the heart of Hebron's Jewish enclave was partially reopened to Palestinian traffic on Monday for the first time in three years despite angry complaints from Israeli settlers in the city.

Acting under cover of darkness, army bulldozers and workers from Hebron's Palestinian-run municipality overnight cleared away cement blocks which had closed off a section of Shuhada Street since the February 1994 massacre by a Jewish settler of 30 Muslims at the nearby Ibrahimi Mosque.

The move came two weeks after Israel withdrew its troops from 80 per cent of Hebron as required under a 1995 interim peace accord. Soldiers remain behind in the rest of the city to guard some 450 zealous Jewish settlers.

Under a Jan. 15 agreement which led to the transfer of power in Hebron, the entire street is to be gradually reopened to all Palestinian traffic over the next four months.

Despite the months of negotiations concerning Shuhada Street, when the one-way 150-metre section of the road was opened to Palestinian taxis, emergency and municiple vehicles Monday morning, it was a low-key affair and few cars took advantage of the route. The section of the street runs by several buildings housing Jews and local settler leaders charged that opening it to Palestinian vehicles would lead to car-bomb attacks against the Israeli enclave by militants.

"On this road there have been several attacks and so we say opening this road is a very, very grave matter," Rabbi Moshe Levinger, who set up the Hebron settlement in 1968, told Israel Radio.

"The Palestinians will just be able to strike and to disappear into Palestinian-controlled areas," he said.

Mr. Levinger had said settlers would protest over the street opening on Monday and the army deployed a large contingent of troops to prevent incidents, but at mid-morning the area was quiet.

Settler leaders were due to meet later Monday with the head of

Israeli troops in the West Bank, General Uzi Dayan, to discuss additional security measures near their homes, possibly including protective walls, military sources said.

Palestinian police commander General Tarek Ziyad said a second section of Shuhada Street running near Hebron's main vegetable market would be reopened next week.

Shuhada (Martyrs') Street is the main axis of Hebron's old city, running through the middle of the Jewish sector still controlled by the Israeli army.

To help broker a compromise agreement on Shuhada Street as part of last month's Hebron accord, the United States has pledged $1 million to widen the road and improve sewage and water systems for nearby residents.

As part of the Hebron agreement, a road divider will be erected as a buffer between the traffic and the settler enclaves.

"The opening of the street means that the two sides are committed to implementing the agreement and the return of normality to the city," said Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natsche.

Palestinian taxi driver Munib Hamouri, 32, said

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COLUMN 8

Brazilians hunt for cockroaches

BRASILIA (R) — Brazilians are catching cockroaches with their bare hands, all in the name of science and a bit of extra cash, local Globo television said. Strong-stomached residents of Rio have been selling batches of roaches to a laboratory for $25 per 100 grammes) of the insects, Globo said. "You give them a quick slap and then grab them by their antennae, it's not a big deal," said housewife Elvira Martinez de Oliveira as she proudly showed off her still wriggling prey. The laboratory, which placed a "we buy cockroaches" advertisement in a local newspaper, is researching a possible vaccine for a series of allergies. The vaccine is based on substances found in the pests. The laboratory needs two kilogramme of the insects, or about 600,000 cockroaches, to complete its research, Globo said.

Woman seeks space romance

PARIS (R) — "Tall female French earthling, 1.83 metres, seeks tall, handsome alien, romantic if possible," Florence Dugoua, 30, says in a message to be carried by a rocket far across the solar system to a mysterious moon. Her lonely hearts advertisement is one of thousands of messages, ranging from calls for galactic peace to invitations to share a plate of pasta, due to blast off on a U.S. rocket in October and bound for Titan, Saturn's biggest moon. The Paris-based European Space Agency (ESA) is hoping that a million humans will seize a chance to make a mark in space by contributing to a site on the Internet computer network:"http://www.Huygens.Co". Signatures, messages and drawings will be accepted until march 1 and stored on a CD-rom computer disc. They will be packed on ESA's Huygens robot probe, alongside an array of scientific experiments to measure Titan's atmosphere.

Canaries sing at identity parade

LONDON (R) — Canaries, doves and budgerigars joined a police line-up in Wales as investigators tried to find the owners of more than 52 stolen pets. The birds turned a room at Barry police station into a colourful and noisy aviary. The birds, worth about 500 pounds ($800), were seized last week during a police swoop. "We have had several inquiries about the viewing and during the next few days hope to reunite as many rightful owners as possible with their feathered friends," a police spokesman said. Among the birds on parade were 24 budgerigars, four canaries, three diamond doves, three finches, six cockatiels, three golden mantle rosella parakeets and two redrumps.

Snake charmer loses charm

BANGKOK (R) — A Thai man who considered himself a snake charmer ran out of luck and was strangled to death by a 3.5 metre boa constrictor, police said. Manee Saisin, a 35-year-old construction worker, was strangled to death by the boa in Phetchabuti, about 150 kilometres south of Bangkok, police said. Manee, known in the area as a snake catcher and charmer, had rushed to see the snake after friends told him the huge serpent had been spotted on the side of a road, police said. A friend of the snake charmer told police that Manee snared the constrictor and put it around his neck. As he and his friends were walking home, Manee suddenly cried for help, the friend said. The friends rushed to get help but when they returned with police officers they found Manee strangled to death.